MARVEL
Age
137
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JUNE 1994
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SPIDER-MAN
ANIMATED SERIES
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Spidey® Sweepstakes
[details inside]

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Usually we don't deal with earthquakes.

Of course, the one time we *did*, it was in the middle of one of the most complex projects we've ever attempted.

This **MARVEL AGE** and special inserts in the current Spider-Man titles (**AMAZING #390, MARVEL TALES #286, SPECTACULAR #213, CLASSICS #15, WEB #113,** and **SPIDER-MAN #46**) offer an in-depth look at the web-slinger's new cartoon series, and reveal *how* the Los Angeles-based Marvel Films folks do that voodoo they do so well. You even get a *different* simulated animation cel in each Spider-book.

We knew it would be logistically challenging — but it seemed manageable.

Then, the day photographer Al Ortega was due to go to the animation studio to catch everyone in action, the week we were to receive advance materials on the cartoon, the earth moved. Six-point-seven, or something like that.

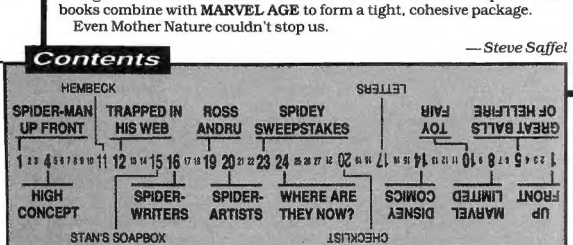
You don't realize *how much* a natural disaster affects people until it's people you know. There wasn't really much damage to the studio itself, but a lot of folks had their homes hit and lives disrupted.

Thanks to perseverance by Matt Edelman, John Semper, John Cawley, and company at Marvel West, we got what we need to take you backstage at the 'toons. With the patient help of Jim Brennan, Vito Incorvaia, and Jim Kreuger in the Marvel Comics Promo office, the inserts in the Spider-Man books combine with **MARVEL AGE** to form a tight, cohesive package.

Even Mother Nature couldn't stop us.

— Steve Saffel

Contents



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Up Front

THE ARACHNIS PROJECT

The special six-part Spider-Man limited series, set to tie-in with the *Spiders!* exhibit opening in June at The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, has been titled **SPIDER-MAN: THE ARACHNIS PROJECT.**

The exhibit will be sponsored in part by the Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc., and will cover all facets of the spider's world. The six-part comic book limited series will feature Washington, DC, locations, including the Smithsonian itself. It begins in June, written by Mike Lackey (**BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD, PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL**), penciled by Andrew Wildman (**X-MEN ADVENTURES**) and inked by Stephen Baskerville (**WEB OF SPIDER-MAN**). It will feature guest-appearances by The Black Cat and Black Fox, and will spotlight the secret cabal known as The Jury.

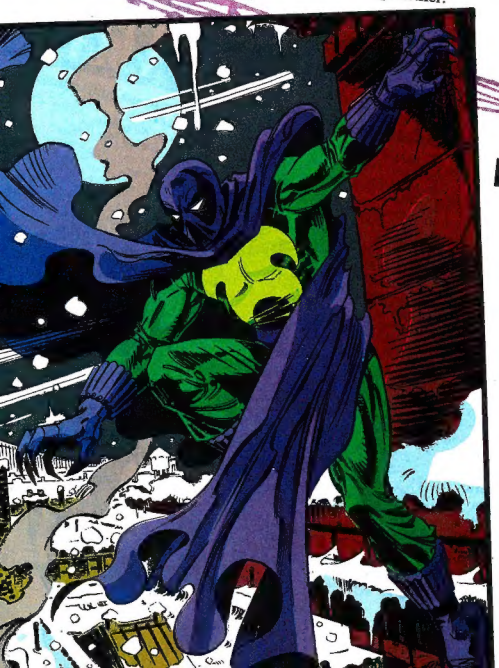
WEB OF DOOM

Spider-Man is accused of murder in **WEB OF DOOM**, a three-issue limited series set to begin in June. When the latest scheme sprung by one of his most deadly foes ends in the death of a captured criminal, that death appears to have been caused by the web-slinger himself!

A snagged crook is found dead in Spider-Man's web, which *usually* dissolves after an hour, and the question that will haunt Spidey is, "was it an accident?" And even as he wrestles with his own conscience, he'll face Code: Blue and the rest of the New York City Police Department in the effort to prove his own innocence.

SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF DOOM will be written by Jack (**ANNEX**) Harris, penciled by Scott Kolins, and inked by Sam DeLarosa. Editor Mark Powers expects people to be caught off guard by the contents of this powerful tale and dazzled by the artwork used to portray it. "This story will shake readers up, and the art is *excellent*. Scott has really grown artistically in the last year. We saw his potential when he penciled **NAMOR** and **THE MUTANT AGENDA**, and **WEB OF DOOM** takes his talent a step further."

NICE GOING, SPIDEY...
...LOSING CONTROL OVER A TRIO OF PUNKS LIKE THAT JUST BECAUSE...BECAUSE MARY JANE'S LEFT YOU!
FRUSTRATED IS ALL...I... HEY-
--WHAT'S THAT SHOUTING?



ON THE PROWL

The mysterious Prowler travels to the brink of doom in his own four-issue limited series that will follow the personal journey of the man under the mask, as he fights to define his role as a hero in the vicious place society has become.

Plans for the series are being played close to the vest, much as the Prowler himself operates. It has been revealed that, as part of his personal journey to define who and what he is, The Prowler will be forced to confront a new anti-hero, The Nightcreeper — a character who disconcertingly reminds the Prowler too much of himself. Plus, the series will showcase the return of a major Spider-Man villain, one who has undergone some startling transformations of his own.

THE PROWLER is written by Carl Potts (**PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL**) and drawn by Bill Reinhold (**PUNISHER**). It's scheduled to hit stands in September.

MAXIMUM VENOM

Readers will see a lot more of Venom this year as Group Editor Danny Fingeroth commits his creative resources to the task of bringing more consistency to the different **VENOM** limited series. "Venom is the first character, really, to get his own monthly series of limited series," Fingeroth noted. "Over the last year we've let different creative teams take the Lethal Protector through his paces, and the results have been great. Now, after the last of these 'rotating creator' mini-series, we'll be assigning writer Howard **(SPIDER-MAN, GHOST RIDER)** Mackie to chronicle Venom's tales on a regular basis. The format will stay the same, and each story arc will be self-contained as its own limited series, but Howard will be building themes and supporting characters that will appear from one arc to the next, giving the character even more consistency."

Before Howard takes over, there is one more all-star cast of creators taking a crack at the character. The first issue of **VENOM: THE MACE**, a three-issue limited series by writer Carl Potts **(PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL)** and artists Liam Sharp **(DEATH'S HEAD II)** and Bill Reinhold **(PUNISHER)** is currently on the stands. Potts is no stranger to the character, having written the **VENOM/PUNISHER** "Funeral Pyre" limited series, but **VENOM: THE MACE** will be a first for penciler Sharp, who has primarily drawn for Marvel U.K. in the past.

"Mace" refers to a new character who Potts describes as amoral. "Mace is a genetically engineered trained killer who's lived his entire life away from society. Now circumstances have thrust him onto the streets and he's forced to live and survive in a world he cannot relate to on a basic level. He's not immoral in that he chooses to be bad; he really has no point of reference to base his judgements on." Mace's background will be of little concern to Venom, who sees Mace as a threat to the innocents Venom has sworn to protect.

Mackie's first story arc, following in June, will be entitled **VENOM: NIGHTS OF VENGEANCE.** This four-issue limited series will be drawn by Ron **(SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED)** Lim and inked by legendary inker Al Milgrom **(THUNDERSTRIKE)**. This series will bring Venom into conflict with Vengeance, the character who recently took over as the Spirit of Vengeance in **GHOST RIDER.**

PUMA BLUES

One of Spider-Man's most perplexing adversaries, The Puma, takes the spotlight in his own four-issue limited series this November. Often an enemy, on occasion a tentative ally, Puma has confronted Spider-Man in the past on a physical level, and on a spiritual one as well. And it is this combination of physical strength and spiritual need that will drive the character to the brink of disaster.

The story, written by J.M. DeMatteis (current scripter on *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*) and drawn by Sal Buscema and Tom Palmer, will follow Puma back to his Native American roots as he finds himself forced to return to his tribe to answer for his crimes. The tribe, disheartened that Puma has used his ancestral powers as a mercenary hit-man, has decided to strip him of his heritage. But in a tale designed to explore Puma's inner resolve and his physical powers, robbing this proud man of all that he is will prove to be difficult, especially if Puma is willing to walk close to the edge of despair and madness to keep what's important to him.

SPIDER-PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

VENOM: THE MACE
Writer: Carl Potts
Penciler: Liam Sharp
Inker: Bill Reinhold
3-issue limited series
32-pages, $2.95 each
Starting in March

VENOM: NIGHTS OF VENGEANCE
Writer: Howard Mackie
Penciler: Ron Lim
Inker: Al Milgrom
4-issue limited series
32-pages, $2.95 each
Starting in June

SPIDER-MAN: THE ARACHNIS PROJECT
Writer: Mike Lackey
Penciler: Andrew Wildman
Inker: Stephen Baskerville
6-issue limited series
32-pages, $1.75 each
Starting in June

PUMA
Writer: J.M. DeMatteis
Penciler: Sal Buscema
Inker: Tom Palmer
4-issue limited series
32-pages, $1.50 each
Starting in November

GOING SOLO

Terrorists the world over are about to meet their match in the **SOLO** Limited Series. This four-issue international slugfest will follow Solo as the mysteries of his past unravel, threatening to overwhelm him, perhaps even permanently. Solo, a vigilante who has teamed up with Spider-Man and the Black Cat on several occasions, has always been mysterious concerning his origins, but come this July, parts of his past —and if he's not careful, his internal organs — will be laid bare for the whole world to see.

SOLO is written by Eric Fein and drawn by Ron Randall.

THE PROWLER
Writer: Carl Potts
Artist: Bill Reinhold
4-issue limited series
32-pages, $1.75 each
Starting in September

SOLO
Writer: Eric Fein
Artist: Ron Randall
4-issue limited series
32-pages, $1.75 each
Starting in July

SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF DOOM
Writer: Jack C. Harris
Penciler: Scott Kolins
Inker: Sam DeLarosa
3-issue limited series
32-pages, $1.75 each
Starting in June

PLAYING IT SPIDER-MAN'S WAY

As has been previously announced, Spidey will make his way to television this fall in his own animated weekly series on **FOX.** Hot on the heels of his TV debut, **Toy Biz, Inc.** — manufacturer of the very successful X-Men action figures — has a new Spider-Man line planned, including all-new 5" action figures, each capable of an action (or carrying a weapon) unique to that particular character. Two different Spider-Man figures and a Venom figure are set for the initial line-up, as are Hobgoblin, Doctor Octopus, Carnage, Lizard, and the all-new Vulture. Deluxe 10" figures are also set for release, as are 3" poseable die-cast *Web-of-Steel* figures and *Projectors* — figures that project scenes from the animated series onto any wall or surface.

There are several other toys in development, among them several playsets and vehicles: a Hobgoblin Wing Bomber, an action set featuring *The Daily Bugle*, a three-in-one *Tri-Spider Smasher*, and a *Smythe Battlechair Attack Vehicle* (large enough to hold the *Smythe: The Ultimate Spider Slayer* action figure). For the younger crowd, there will be a plush Spider-Man, electronic talking Spider-Man and Venom figures, and dress-up costume sets.

Specific release dates have yet to be set for each toy.

– Jerry A. Novick

HIGH CONCEPT

Photographs by Albert L. Ortega

The dizzying

"THINK NOSEBLEED"

It's mid-January in Los Angeles, and Dennis Venizelos is sitting in the studios of Marvel Films Animation, giving his take on the upcoming Spider-Man animated series. You start to wonder if he's talking about the show's violence factor — sounds like we could be dealing with a too-militant web-slinger — "90s-hip" but out of character. Is television once again selling us a Spider-Man a dozen steps removed from the hero on the printed page?

Suddenly, all becomes clear. Venizelos, the art director on the series, is speaking of plans to make this a show told from the heights of New York City. Nosebleed — as in nosebleed seats. Visually and thematically, he says, Spider-Man's latest TV incarnation is going to be like nothing ever seen before. Except in the comics.

Scheduled to air on Saturday mornings beginning this fall, *Spider-Man* is the latest step in an ongoing crusade to bring the Marvel Universe to the screen — the right way. Like the hugely successful *X-Men* animated series, *Spider-Man* will run on **FOX**, benefiting from the network's penchant for ground breaking programming. Episode-to-episode continuity again will be the order of the day, offering intelligent, dramatic storylines that put the kiddie cartoons to shame. But Marvel's own involvement is arguably an even greater assurance of the show's success.

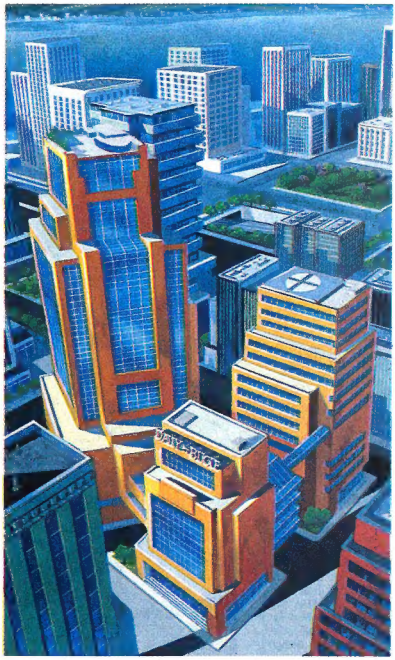
Whereas *X-Men* is produced by Saban Entertainment — an independent studio which solicits Marvel's creative input — *Spider-Man* is the first show to fly directly under the new Marvel Films banner, conceived and executed in-house, and "in-house," of course, translates as "in control" when it comes to the way the wall-crawler is portrayed.

"We're trying to take as many qualities as possible from the Spider-Man books and put them in the show," said Stan Lee, who's overseeing the project as executive producer and chairman of Marvel Films. "That, of course, includes the angst, the humor. . .Everything that we might do here is in the comic book itself."

"In some ways, we're in the unique position of doing exactly what Stan did in the comic back in the 1960s, which is to introduce elements that simply have not existed before in this particular medium," added John Semper, producer and story editor on the show. Melodrama, he said, is a comics fundamental sadly absent from TV animation. This shortcoming has tripped up earlier versions of *Spider-Man* and countless other programs.

"For lack of a better term, we're going to be doing a little bit of genuine soap opera," Semper said. "When Spider-Man gets up into the sky and he's fighting these super villains. . .what makes it unique is that he also brings with him the problems created down below when he was plain old Peter Parker. All of those romances, all of those disappointments and frustrations, are what make his battles up above interesting."

Determined to keep Spider-Man in character, Semper has actively recruited writers from the book to work on scripts for the show, among them Gerry Conway. "When



development of the SPIDER-MAN cartoon

I was younger, I used to watch that [old *Spider-Man*] series, and it always surprised me that, when the credits rolled, I never saw the names of people who were currently doing the comic book," Semper said. "That was astonishing to me, because these clearly were the Spider-Man creators. I always said if I was ever in a position to do it, the first guys I'd go to would be the ones writing the comic."

Opposite: Spider-Man (a character drawing from the series design packet) swinging over New York City as depicted in a dramatic development sketch, illustrating the style series animators are seeking. **Top:** The J-3 Complex, the center of J. Jonah Jameson's publishing empire. **Bottom:** Art Director Dennis Venizelos, Story Editor John Semper, and Executive Producer Stan Lee in an "animated" story conference.

By making good on this resolution, he said, he's already receiving script pages that have the Spider-Man persona nailed cold. Now, when the creative team and their hero make the perilous leap from the demands of

JUST WATCH OUT FOR VERTIGO.

comics to those of television, they won't be jumping blindfolded.

"It really is a tough thing — to take a character whose life revolves around soap opera as well as action-adventure and to try to capture that in a [Saturday morning] show," Semper acknowledged. "But that's what ensures that when it's on the air, it's going to be *revolutionary* in terms of what it tackles and the way it tackles it. There aren't any other animated shows I can think of that have handled the personal lives of their characters with this degree of depth. The closest one is *X-Men*, but even that is still pretty much wall-to-wall action. And in *Batman*, you get into the mindsets of the villains a lot, but you never spend any time understanding what Bruce Wayne is going through. That's one of the things that doesn't work."

LIVE. . .FROM NEW YORK. . .

From Peter Parker's Chelsea bachelor pad to the Daily Bugle's offices overlooking Midtown, the Spider-Man saga has always been a New York story, an element which the television team has enthusiastically embraced. "We want *Spider-Man* to have a contemporary, live-action feel," Supervising Producer Bob Richardson said. "This should have a reality to it that's more like *NYPD Blue* than *The Smurfs*. In the comic it's always been very evident that New York is where the story takes place, so we're making that very evident, too."

Top: Character design artist Jeff Snow working on a concept illustration that features Spider-Man and Dr. Octopus. **Middle:** Having finished work on a character design for The Chameleon, color key artist Allyn Conley then turns her attention to Mysterio. **Bottom:** The painted series design illustration showing Aunt May Parker's Forest Hills home.

Because of *Spider-Man's* highly specific urban setting, Semper added, the program will be better equipped than most to introduce weighty subject matter. Too often, he argued, "issue-oriented" animation scripts ultimately produce "a forced, in-your-face kind of show. In *Spider-Man*, you can do a show about a serious issue without it looking out of place, because that's the world in which he lives, and it makes sense," Semper said, as opposed to "*The Fantastic Four*, where a lot of the adventures take place out in the galaxy, and universes are eaten like popcorn by Galactus. Ours is a much smaller world, and we can tackle issues that are closer to home."

Rooting *Spider-Man* in virtual geographic reality involves no small amount of visual research. Background illustrators thumb through photo collections with titles like *Above New York* and *The Rooftops of New York*. Maps are consulted, then consulted again. Recently, painstakingly rendered animation cels depicting Manhattan's Pan Am Building were scrapped, as the California-based art staff learned the Midtown landmark had gotten a new tenant — and a new sign — more than a year ago.

"It's a challenge getting all the places right," Richardson conceded. Still, he said, the animators aren't about to dump their star into some generic, cookie-cutter backdrop. They want the wall-crawler swinging across a cityscape that's as authentic and alive as the New York in a Martin Scorsese film.

"In the shows that were done before, it always felt like the city was empty," Richardson said. "Our feeling is, let's populate this city, let's make it so that when you're down at street level, there are crowds of people and cars going by. And then the picture moves up the side of a building, and there's Spider-Man. So you get that contrast."

Just watch out for *vertigo*. Venizelos and Richardson said they'd like to work three-dimensional effects into the series wherever possible, giving *Spider-Man's* ac-

tion sequences an appropriately precarious P.O.V. Take the Letterman show's new bird's-eye-view opening, insert a guy in costume swinging by on a web line, and you get the idea.

"The previous shows were very flat," Richardson said. "You didn't get the kind of 'hanging-above-the-city' feel that really should be there with a character like Spider-Man. You should get butterflies in your stomach [while] watching, because that's what comes with hanging from the top of a 60-story building."

As Venizelos and his animators readied the series' initial episodes for production, they were still determining how this 3-D look would be achieved. They'll start with a process known as wire-framing, in which they "build" skeletal models of skyscrapers and other backdrop elements on a computer screen. But, unless Spider-Man is going to be weaving his way through a construction site, these skeletons need to be completed. Color and texture must be mapped on to the models to give them "walls."

For crispness and cel-to-cel consistency, the ideal would be to generate these building facades completely by computer, Venizelos said. In the end, though, a more conventional method involving some hand-painting is likely to prove the viable choice. "The technology is out there. It's just a matter of having the money to do it, because it's kind of expensive right now," Venizelos said. Still, he added, "When production first starts on any show, the animators always have good intentions. This is one show where those intentions will be carried out."

DESPERATELY SEEKING SPIDEY

One happy dilemma the art team has wrestled with is deciding which comics stylization will serve as a model for the show. Over the decades, some of the greatest names in comics have drawn the web-slinger — the progression, of course, is legend: Steve Ditko took a scrawny high-school science nerd and made him a super hero, John Romita and Gil Kane gave him some muscle, and later, Todd McFarlane contorted his battle pose in a way that italicized the "spider" in Spider-Man. Whose lead should the animators follow?

"Basically, they're all good," said Stan Lee, who collaborated with the best of the best, "but in the past few years, I've learned a little more about animation than I used to know, and it's more than taking a certain artist's style. You have to take something that will look good in motion and doesn't have too many lines to it. . .There are so many considerations that by the time we're finished and we feel *this* is the look of the show, it's really an amalgam of everybody's style. We may like the way somebody handles legs, or the mask, or facial expressions. . .We take a little bit from each one.

"It'll be Spider-Man, but it will have its own unique animated look," he continued. The Fleischer-esque animation in *Batman* has been comparably derived, he said. "While the Batman show has the dark mood of the movie and of Frank Miller's style, the art doesn't look like Frank Miller's or, indeed, like any other artist's. It has its own look."

The writing staff has a similar mandate to reconcile past and present as they cull from the comic's rich history. Script plans call for Spider-Man to tangle with villains ranging from the Green Goblin and Doctor Octopus to Hobgoblin, Kraven, The Vulture, and Venom — all in present time. Establishing Peter Parker as a college-age hero is the first step in a complicated process of making the show's story logistics work.

"A comic book is an interesting creature, because it's sort of bits and pieces," Semper said. "If it involved one author setting out to do one magnum opus, there might be an overall story arc that would tie the universe together more tightly. In the case of *Amazing Spider-*

Top: An early painted concept illustration of the web-slinger. Since this piece was done, the artists have adjusted various elements—such as the webs and the eyes—to make Spidey appear more as he does in the comic books. **Middle:** Storyboard artist Del Barras, whose artwork has appeared both in comics and animation. **Bottom:** Pete Avanzino, another of the storyboard artists, sketching out the action of a scene for an early episode.

Man, you've got close to 400 comic books, all from different eras, all written by different writers, drawn by different artists, and edited by a lot of different people.

"What we get to do at this particular point," he said,

"Everything that we might do here is in the comic book

"is walk in after a body of work has been completed and say, 'Let's take all of these different stories and elements, but now let's approach it from the point of view of having a fixed number of episodes, and let's fill in the holes and make it head in a specific direction.'"

While honoring Spider-Man's roots, Semper argued that the show's need for cohesion rules out "slavish adaptations" of the comics. In some ways, he said, there may actually be room to improve on the classics. He cited a planned wrinkle in the Scorpion's origin as a case in point.

"When Farley Stillwell creates the Scorpion, he uses a technology we're calling Neogenics," Semper said. "Well, let's assume that Neogenics is really quite an amazing discovery. Even after the Scorpion story, other people come along and start tinkering with it, because it's new and exciting and was invented and researched at Empire State University. This can subsequently serve as an explanation for things like Curt Connors turning himself into the Lizard. So now you've got a link between two completely separate stories that never had any kind of link before, and yet the link is a very logical one.

"You start to justify why so many weird creatures and villains turn up in New York all of a sudden," Semper said. "You start to get a feeling that, 'Hey, there's a universe here.' It requires a lot of headwork. You've really got to create that universe very completely, or it's just not going to hang together very well."

Top: Storyboard artist Jim McLean, character sheets close at hand, producing illustrations of Spider-Man similar to the one on page four. **Middle:** Background designer Vladimir Spasojevic at his drawing table, surrounded by concept artwork. **Bottom:** A nuclear power plant belonging to Oscorp, the industrial conglomerate controlled by Norman Osborn and Wardell Stromm.

THE DREAM TEAM

In today's market, the cost of building a new universe is substantial. According to Avi Arad, chief of Marvel Films and an executive producer on the show, a single 30-minute episode of *Spider-Man* will cost roughly $400,000. That's par for the course that *X-Men* and *Batman* play, but about $125,000 more than the average half-hour cartoon.

It's far more difficult to put a price tag on the human effort. That saga begins with *X-Men*, whose success sparked Fox's interest in picking up a companion show. Perhaps the most enthusiastic cheerleader was Fox Children's Network President Margaret Loesch, who previously headed the Marvel Productions animation production venture in the 1980s. Loesch felt so strongly about Marvel's new "stick to the comics" approach that she put in an order for 65 episodes of *Spider-Man*. By the fall of 1995, the show will have a large enough rotation to move from Saturday morning to weekdays.

At the same time, the prospect of returning to a retooled, in-house Marvel production operation proved attractive. With the newly appointed Arad leading the way, Marvel Films opened its doors last June. "There's a comfort in having the producer, the art director, Stan Lee, and myself on the same floor," Arad said. "It's a fan group, all in one spot, and all committed to the same thing."

The process of assembling a full production unit continued well into 1994, with much of the effort focused on reviewing portfolios. The bulk of those came from the ranks of storyboard artists and background designers—people responsible for the models which guide the show's animators. Those who are hired form the core of a studio staff that will eventually number about 60 persons.

Although comics-trained talent isn't prevalent, Richardson said, the Marvel Films group *does* include

Above: Another of the New York City rough development sketches prepared by Marvel Films artists to ensure that all of the illustrators involved with the series bring to their work the urban sense unique to *Spider-Man*. **Below:** Background design artist Larry Kim, inking an interior concept drawing to be used as reference.

artists like Del Barras, whose work most recently appeared in Marvel UK comics, and who will be one of the series storyboard artists. Primarily, though, the resource pool will be folks from television. "We've got people who've worked on *Batman*, *X-Men*, and a lot of different shows that have been done over the years," Richardson said. "We're drawing from among those guys, as well as others who may not have been working on super-hero stuff for some time but who are very much capable of doing that."

The animation itself will be done in Japan, home to some of the hottest facilities in the industry. Hundreds of illustrators will produce the drawings that literally bring Spider-Man to life — some 15,000 to 20,000 cels per episode. As Venizelos noted, Marvel's choice of studio (still to be announced at press time in February) won't have been made lightly.

While the art staff was comparison shopping overseas, Semper was busy gathering his Spider-Man writing team so that there would be stories to animate. He was also making final revisions to the *Spider-Man* "bible," a 100-page writers' manual conceived to keep character development on track. Even for veteran wall-crawler scribes, the volume offers a fresh perspective on the hero and his supporting cast. Take, for example, Semper's analogy between Spider-Man and a disaffected James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*: "Like Peter Parker, [Dean] is very reactive. . .You always know that deep down inside, even though he isn't showing it, he's really seething with angst, frustration, anger, and raw energy."

HOW DO YOU SAY "THWIP"?

As finished scripts roll in and episodes begin to return from the 15- to 20-week animation process, Richardson said, key decisions about the sound of *Spider-Man* will be finalized. Sound, ultimately, is one of the few areas where the show *can't* draw on its comic book source material. Music composers will be auditioned, and actors will be signed to give voice to the characters. Viewers who get a charge out of celebrity voice talents who star in animated projects won't be disappointed by the *Spider-Man* roster and, thanks to the trend set by **FOX's** *The Simpsons*, additional celebrity cameos may also be on tap.

And when it comes to plot, Semper keeps the phone lines to New York wide open. His point man in Marvel editorial is Spider-Man Group Editor Danny Fingeroth, who called his role as a consultant on the show "comparable to Bob Harras's on *X-Men*. I read and advise on the stories and teleplays, and give them input on keeping things true to the characters."

"They keep you honest," Semper said of his colleagues back east. "When you start to do something that isn't spider-like, there are a lot of people around who will say, 'No, no, no, that's not right,' or 'Hey, why isn't Spider-Man's spider sense working here?' That's the kind of thing that these guys are really wonderful for. They have a very good sense of what the character should be up to at any given moment."

This is what Marvel Films has striven for since its inception: to stay true to comics form. This is why Stan Lee and Avi Arad sought out a network that values the Marvel Universe for what it is. This is why Marvel opened its own studio. This is why, above all, the show seeks to capture the melodramatic essence of Marvel's signature creation. "It's one thing to have a super hero fight a guy flying around on a bat jet throwing pumpkin bombs," Semper said. "But it's another thing when the guy throwing the pumpkin bombs happens to be the insane father of the super hero's best friend in private life.

"If we don't have those kinds of complications, then we don't really have Spider-Man."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Photo by Anna Harper

AVI ARAD, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

The chief creative force behind Marvel Films and Toy Biz, Arad is at the center of the Spider-Man multi-media storm. Recognized in the toy field as one of its top creative talents, his successes have included *My Pretty Ballerina* for Tyco, *Roller Blade Baby* for Mattel, and Marvel Super Heroes for Toy Biz. His television projects have included *King Arthur and the Knights of Justice* and *Conan the Adventurer*. He joined Marvel Entertainment in 1993 and has been instrumental in developing Marvel Films, as well as Toy Biz's Bots-Masters, Pocket Comics, and Projectors.

BOB RICHARDSON, SUPERVISING PRODUCER

Marvel Films' resident Emmy winner, Richardson was honored by the Television Academy for each of the first four seasons of *Muppet Babies*. He produced the show for Marvel's 1980s animation division, where he was also a director on *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*. Richardson has done animation work with Marvel since the 60s, in a career that includes stints with Disney and the Children's Television Workshop.

DENNIS VENIZELOS, ART DIRECTOR

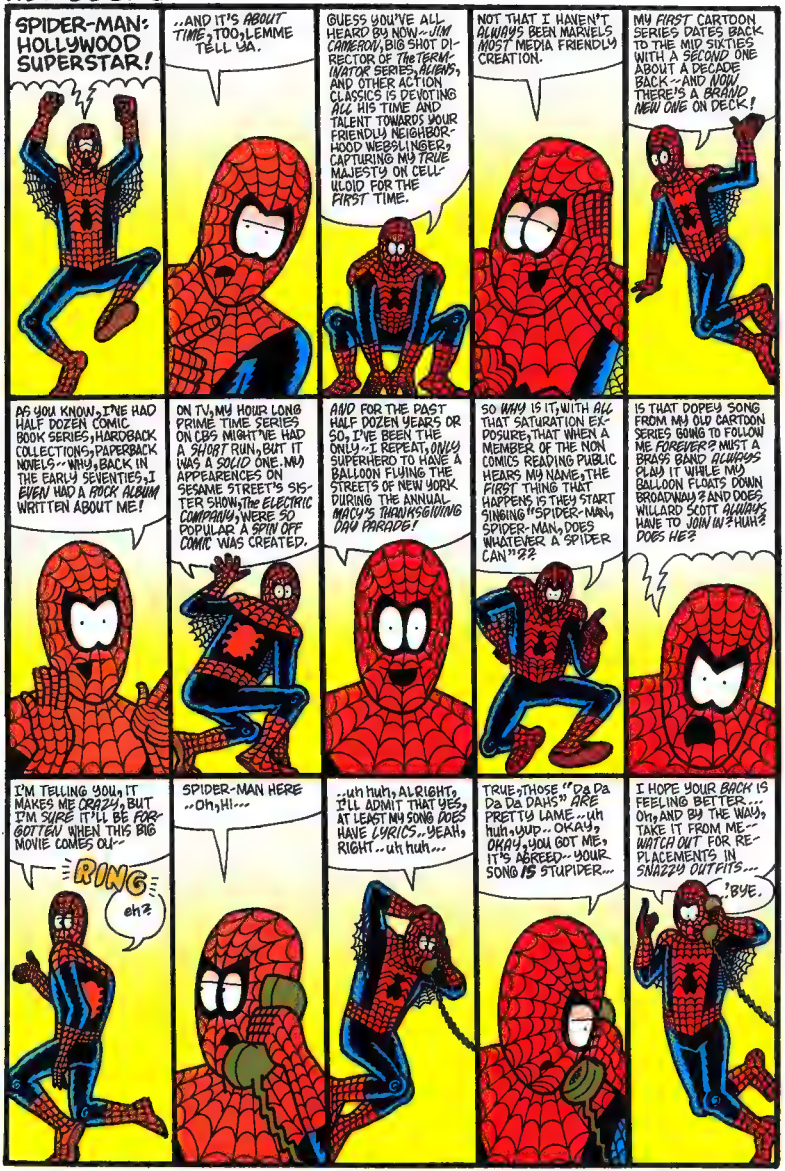
As backgrounds supervisor on *FernGully. . .The Last Rainforest*, Venizelos knew Robin Williams before he became a giant blue genie. (Okay, so they didn't actually work together, but Venizelos did supply the trees into which Williams's Batty Koda character crashes.) He began his career in 1970 painting backgrounds at Hanna-Barbera, and worked there until joining Richardson on *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends* and *Muppet Babies* in the early 80s. Most recently, Venizelos served as art director on *X-Men*, as well as background conceptual artist for Disney's *The Goofy Movie*, due in theaters later this year.

JOHN SEMPER, PRODUCER/STORY EDITOR

"I have the greatest job in the world," Semper said. "I can take the entire Spider-Man saga and pick and choose that which I think is exciting enough to bring to the animated screen." This latest choice assignment follows stints writing for "a million cartoon shows," among them *The Superfriends*, *Scooby-Doo*, *The Smurfs* and *DuckTales*.

Another alumni of Marvel Productions, Semper developed the studio's animated version of Jim Henson's *Fraggle Rock*. His credits outside of animation include the script for the Kid 'N Play movie *Class Act*, as well as writing for interactive educational projects produced by George Lucas. His short film on the life of Woody Woodpecker creator Walter Lantz is part of the Smithsonian Institution's permanent collection.

HEMBECK


SPIDER-MAN: HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTAR!
..AND IT'S ABOUT TIME, TOO, LEMME TELL YA.
GUESS YOU'VE ALL HEARD BY NOW--JIM CAMERON, BIG SHOT DIRECTOR OF The TERMINATOR SERIES, ALIENS, AND OTHER ACTION CLASSICS IS DEVOTING ALL HIS TIME AND TALENT TOWARDS YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSLINGER, CAPTURING MY TRUE MAJESTY ON CELLULOID FOR THE FIRST TIME.
NOT THAT I HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN MARVELS MOST MEDIA FRIENDLY CREATION.
MY FIRST CARTOON SERIES DATES BACK TO THE MID SIXTIES WITH A SECOND ONE ABOUT A DECADE BACK--AND NOW, THERE'S A BRAND NEW ONE ON DECK!
AS YOU KNOW, I'VE HAD HALF DOZEN COMIC BOOK SERIES, HARDBACK COLLECTIONS, PAPERBACK NOVELS--WHY, BACK IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, I EVEN HAD A ROCK ALBUM WRITTEN ABOUT ME!
ON TV, MY HOUR LONG PRIME TIME SERIES ON CBS MIGHT'VE HAD A SHORT RUN, BUT IT WAS A SOLID ONE. MY APPEARENCES ON SESAME STREET'S SISTER SHOW, The ELECTRIC COMPANY, WERE SO POPULAR A SPIN OFF COMIC WAS CREATED.
AND FOR THE PAST HALF DOZEN YEARS OR SO, I'VE BEEN THE ONLY--I REPEAT, ONLY SUPERHERO TO HAVE A BALLOON FLYING THE STREETS OF NEW YORK DURING THE ANNUAL MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE!
SO WHY IS IT, WITH ALL THAT SATURATION EXPOSURE, THAT WHEN A MEMBER OF THE NON COMICS READING PUBLIC HEARS MY NAME, THE FIRST THING THAT HAPPENS IS THEY START SINGING "SPIDER-MAN, SPIDER-MAN, DOES WHATEVER A SPIDER CAN"??
IS THAT DOPEY SONG FROM MY OLD CARTOON SERIES GOING TO FOLLOW ME FOREVER? MUST A BRASS BAND ALWAYS PLAY IT WHILE MY BALLOON FLOATS DOWN BROADWAY? AND DOES WILLARD SCOTT ALWAYS HAVE TO JOIN IN? HUH? DOES HE?
I'M TELLING YOU, IT MAKES ME CRAZY, BUT I'M SURE IT'LL BE FORGOTTEN WHEN THIS BIG MOVIE COMES OU--
RING
eh?
SPIDER-MAN HERE --Oh, HI---
..uh huh, ALRIGHT, I'LL ADMIT THAT YES, AT LEAST MY SONG DOES HAVE LYRICS.. YEAH, RIGHT..uh huh...
TRUE, THOSE "Da Da Da Da DAHS" ARE PRETTY LAME--uh huh--yup.. OKAY, OKAY, YOU GOT ME, IT'S AGREED-- YOUR SONG IS STUPIDER...
I HOPE YOUR BACK IS FEELING BETTER.... Oh, AND BY THE WAY, TAKE IT FROM ME-- WATCH OUT FOR REPLACEMENTS IN SNAZZY OUTFITS...
!BYE.

Trapped in His Own Web

The results of the Spider-Summit

"I've never seen so many creative people, stuck in one room, so excited about a project," **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** writer J.M. DeMatteis enthused. "We're still hopping up and down like lunatics."

DeMatteis was describing the energy generated at a February summit of the creative teams for all of the Spider-Man titles. At that meeting, hosted by Group Editor Danny Fingeroth, plans were laid out for the major twists and turns in store for the web-slinger over the next *two years*.

According to Fingeroth, the dramatic foundation for these events is already being established. February's **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #388** concluded the "Lifetheft" storyline in which Peter Parker learned that the people who claimed to be his parents were actually imposters sent by his longtime foe, The Chameleon. As a result Spider-Man, ravaged by tragedy, began to shed his *Peter Parker* persona in the "Pursuit" crossover, which ran through **SPIDER-MAN #45, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #211, WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #112,** and **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #389.**

Fingeroth revealed that Spidey will become increasingly brutal as the year progresses, developing a merciless demeanor of which the benevolent Peter Parker would be incapable. "Everybody's dark side manifests itself differently," Fingeroth said. "Spidey won't turn into The Punisher, but he'll be something he *never* was before. When he learns who the *real* mastermind was behind the Chameleon's machinations, [he'll be] enraged, and he'll hurt somebody!" And Peter's retreat into his web-slinging alter-ego will have devastating consequences for his wife, Mary Jane Watson-Parker.

At the same time, once-buried family traumas will surface as, Fingeroth noted, "Mary Jane will have major problems with her father. Readers will find out that her party girl persona is a ruse, and that she has deep emotional issues to deal with."

Writer J.M. DeMatteis, who, as of **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #391** (on sale in May) succeeds David Michelinie as series writer, is perhaps best known as the writer who killed off the Green Goblin in **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #200.** He elaborated: "Peter has basically gone over

the edge. He's been hurt so many times before that he now feels safer behind the mask. It'll have a *profound* effect on his marriage."

Aunt May will suffer as well. "Peter and May will try to keep a stiff upper lip," after learning the truth about Peter's parents, but, DeMatteis revealed, "[She] will suffer a stroke in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #391, and when she goes down, Peter *really* goes down and retreats even further from his personal life."

Because Fingeroth has actively positioned all four monthly Spider-Man titles as equal partners, each will develop integral aspects of the story and will introduce key elements. Writer Tom DeFalco enters the fray as the stream of events begins to affect the quarterly SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED with issue #7, and The Scorpion will return in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #215 as DeFalco takes on the monthly writing reins of that series, as well. SPIDER-MAN #49 will introduce a new villain — Coldheart — and Demogoblin and Hobgoblin will battle to the *death* in issue #50. Additionally, WEB OF SPIDER-MAN will introduce a new villain

Fingeroth described as, "a kind of Green Goblin for the nineties — in the sense of his being a mystery figure."

That new villain is not the *only* mystery figure on the horizon. "For months, we've been alluding to a big SPIDER-MAN shake-up," Fingeroth commented. "A sequence of events that happened *fifteen years ago* will come to fruition in the SPIDER-MAN books, and nobody in Spider-Man's life will be left unscathed." He

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, his presence in the other books will cause serious ramifications for AMAZING.) "If I were an avid reader, these issues are the ones I wouldn't miss," Fingeroth said. "Everything that's happened before was a setup for this mystery — the parents, everything. This thing is fifteen years in the

"It'll make the secret of his parents seem like small potatoes."

elaborated by saying that a mysterious and powerful figure from Peter's past will return in June, prompted by the myriad personal tragedies Peter has recently suffered.

The mysterious figure will first appear in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #114 and 115, SPIDER-MAN #48 and 49, and SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #215. (While this shadowy character won't appear in

making. The character will make his way to New York in July and, by August, readers will know who it is." He balked, however, when pressed for hints as to the character's identity, offering a comment for the readers. "I'm not going to tell you, and you'll thank me for it later on. Too much information is revealed nowadays in the fan press, but ninety percent of the fun is in the mystery. This is a

great mystery that readers can figure out.

"In the meantime, I'm not going to ruin it for people who want to go along for the ride.

"As we approach [AMAZING SPIDER-MAN] #400, Peter will face the biggest shock of his life," he allowed. "It'll make the secret of his parents seem like small potatoes." Additionally, "Doc Ock will be back, and so will The Puma. The revelations about the past will be earth-shattering," he predicted.

DeMatteis agreed. "You wouldn't believe what I'm *not* telling you. I've been in this business a long time, and I can get pretty jaded about all this, but I am really excited about what we have planned for these books."

Thus, while months of plans were developed during the brainstorming sessions that involved writers DeFalco, DeMatteis, Terry Kavanagh (WEB OF SPIDER-MAN), and Howard Mackie (SPIDER-MAN, GHOST RIDER), they will be kept tightly under wraps until they actually see print. And, according to Danny Fingeroth, with the excitement building through WEB OF SPIDER-MAN, SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, and SPIDER-MAN, leading to February 1995's AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #400, he predicts that readers will come to regard that issue as the most thrilling Spider-Man adventure of all time.

"Issue #300 introduced Venom," he warned. "Just wait'll they see #400!"

– *Terry Hernon*

The Spider-Titles

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
Writer: J.M. DeMatteis
Penciler: Mark Bagley
Inker: Randy Emberlin
Pages: 32
Frequency: Monthly
Price: $1.25

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Penciler: Sal Buscema
Inker: Sal Buscema
Pages: 32
Frequency: Monthly
Price: $1.25

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN
Writer: Terry Kavanagh
Penciler: Alex Saviuk
Inker: Stephen Baskerville
Pages: 32
Frequency: Monthly
Price: $1.25

SPIDER-MAN
Writer: Howard Mackie
Penciler: Tom Lyle
Inker: Scott Hanna
Pages: 32
Frequency: Monthly
Price: $1.95

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED
Writer: Tom DeFalco & various
Penciler: Ron Lim & various
Inker: James Sanders III & various
Pages: 64
$3.95

Stan's SOAP BOX

Hi, Heroes!

Let's face it, probably no Marvel costumed cavorter has had more metamorphoses than our ever-popular, peripatetic, web-swinging, wall-crawling friendly neighborhood Spider-Man!

He's been the star of his own comic book for more than three decades — in fact, he's the star of a whole gaggle of Spidey titles right now — plus having been featured in countless graphic novels, three (count 'em!) three animated TV series, one live-action TV series, one Japanese live-action series, and now the most exciting project of all, his new, upcoming feature film to be written and directed by that master of morphing mayhem, Jim *(Terminator)* Cameron! Of course, since it's planned to be one of the biggest action movies of all time, and since Jim still has one more film to complete before he starts work on Spidey's blockbuster, we probably won't be seeing it on the big screen for another couple of years, but hey, we've waited all this time so what's another couple dozen months between friends?

Anyway, to get back to ol' webhead's various incarnations, Marvel Age's exuberant editor, Sagacious Steve Saffel, suggested to me that you and all of Marveldom might like to know what it was like for me to follow Spidey through all those different phases of his checkered existence.

Actually, shepherding Spidey's early career in comics was a gratifying experience because the bullpen and I had absolute control over both his stories and his artwork. If an issue turned out great (as usual!), it was our doing, and if one bombed, we took the blame, and that's the way it should be.

But Spidey's earlier animated career was different. Although I personally narrated one of the series, the actual control was in the hands of the animation studio, and/or the TV networks. It was they who passed judgment on the stories and the style of art. So, though the characters were ours, the actual interpretations were in the hands of other people, for better or worse. In fact, in the case of the earlier Japanese live-action TV series, not even all the characters were ours. That particular series had Spidey with a kid brother, a bevy of totally different girlfriends, and a giant robot who turned into a flying dreadnought (a la the *"Transformers"*) whenever trouble brewed — which was every few seconds of film time.

However, in the best super hero tradition, truth and justice have won out! Today, mighty Marvel has its very own animation studio and is totally in charge of its own destiny. Working hand-in-hand with the fabulous **FOX TV** network, we've produced the sensationally successful *X-Men* animated series and are now in the process of animating an all-new Spider-Man series which will be aired on **FOX** starting this fall. I can't wait till you see Spidey's new video adventures; I guarantee they'll surpass your every expectation, because this time it's Peter Parker's alter ego the way he *should* be presented — produced by the team that knows him best!

The same holds true for Jim Cameron's upcoming feature film. I've already read the story that Jim plans to use and I can truthfully say it's the greatest, most exciting, most authentic Spider-Man spectacular of all! Remember, Jim is a long-time Spidey fan, a guy who loves the character as much as we do, a man who the first time we met told me that he's been hooked on Spider-Man since he was fourteen years old! Nobody is better qualified to make our wondrous wall-crawler a world-wide cinematic sensation than the charismatic Mr. Cameron!

The point of all this is not to nominate Jolly Jim for sainthood, but rather to illustrate how lucky we Marvelites are that the tide as turned for the amazing Spider-Man! It's as though everything that has gone before has merely been a period of preliminary bouts. Now, at last, the screen career of Spider-Man is ready for the main event!

Sure, it's all been fun. We've gotten a kick out of the many different versions and interpretations of Aunt May's favorite nephew. It was exciting living through the various series and shows, the good, the mediocre, and the forgettable. It was all part of a mile-a-minute learning experience. But now, the world's longest period of basic training is over. Now we're finally going into action. And the best part is the fact that you'll be sharing all the thrills and surprises with us.

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

Stan Lee and James Cameron

WRITE STUFF

For a comic book writer, with a great character come great responsibility — and expectations. Or something like that.

Spider-Man is a character for all seasons — and with four titles to his name, the reader might expect to find a radically different approach to each "season." But the "Spidey Team" assembled by Marvel Group Editor Danny Fingeroth meets for monthly "pow-wows" to give and receive feedback, and to share ideas and criticisms. It is the Spider-Man character that is the web that binds the diverse talents of writers J.M. DeMatteis, Terry Kavanagh, Tom DeFalco, and Howard Mackie.

Ask ex-**SPECTACULAR** (and now **AMAZING**) **SPIDER-MAN** writer J. M. DeMatteis what draws him to Marvel's web-swinging wonder, and he'll answer, "Peter Parker is the last decent man in comics." A Brooklyn-born musician and ex-rock music journalist, DeMatteis sent his first story proposals to Marvel and DC in 1971 (he was 18). His initial story pitches were rejected, but he kept submitting and, in 1979, he got his first real break when DC Comics published a story in *House of Mystery*.

A graduate of (coincidentally) Empire State College, where he majored in English and Creative Writing, DeMatteis finally came on board at Marvel in 1980 as a freelance writer. His first Marvel book was **CONAN**, and he cranked out some self-described "mediocre" stuff until he hit his stride with the Epic Comics **MOONSHADOW** series painted by Jon J Muth.

DeMatteis explained that his angle is to take a character who's very familiar — even around for some 30 years — and ask "who is this guy?" Taking a tried-and-true character like Spidey and holding him up to a deeply personal light distinguishes DeMatteis's style as a comic story writer. And when DeMatteis made his provocative mark on Spider-Man with the wrenchingly psychological story "Kraven's Last Hunt," it was clear to the audience that a new Spider-Man writer was born, for the public acclaim was overwhelming.

An Inside Look at the Spider-Man Writers

Even though DeMatteis grew up reading **SPIDER-MAN**, it was as a writer that he discovered the character when he wrote his first stories for **MARVEL TEAM-UP**. "Peter Parker is your basic decent, neurotic, guilt-ridden guy — an echo of myself. I can relate — I feel really connected to him." DeMatteis's "personal mark on Spidey is rooted in stories that are fairly singular," character-intense and psychologically-driven. When DeMatteis starts questioning a character's psyche, what is revealed becomes the story.

But he still finds Spidey to be "a lot of fun." Balancing his work between off-kilter DC Vertigo stories and Marvel's premiere super hero, DeMatteis feels he has clearly hit his stride.

The new writer on **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN**, editor in chief, and "Bossman" Tom DeFalco is regularly lampooned by Rick Parker in **MARVEL AGE** and the "Bullpen Bulletins," yet he can be as enigmatic as a Marvel super hero. Where did he grow up? "In the New York area." Where did he go to school? "I don't like my alma mater, so I won't give it any publicity." So where did he get his training as a writer? "I didn't get it at school. I took one course in Creative Writing, and almost got driven out of the class — but the teacher liked me.

"I was into writing short stories, and pointed out the profit-making aspect of doing so, and everyone else in the class looked down on me for that. They were all into writing poetry." When did he get started as a writer? [Laughs] "Too long ago. . ."

However, DeFalco *will* reveal how he came to pen Spidey stories: "I had been editing the Spider-Man books, about 13 years ago, for a two-year stint. When I was no longer on the books, [new] Editor Danny Fingeroth came in one day and asked me to recommend a writer who was familiar with the Spider-Man character." After DeFalco reached for his list of freelance writers, he looked up to see Fingeroth looking at him — "He wanted me to write, which surprised me. But I thought about it, and then started writing."

DeFalco is very pleased to be joining Fingeroth's "incredible Spider Team." Although tight-lipped about himself, DeFalco certainly has plenty to say in praise of Spider-Man: "What really attracts me. . .is that I think Peter Parker is a terrific person. He's just a really nice guy — somebody who you'd like to know, who would enrich your life. He's responsible, warm, and sincere. And I also think of him as our greatest super hero."

Running counter to this tribute, DeFalco revealed, when asked where he expects the book to go, "If you're asking me if I think any fans will come to the book because I'm writing it, hah! Actually I'm sure that quite a number of people who hear that I'm writing it will run!" All kidding aside, DeFalco declared, "I love Spider-Man. I'll have to give up sleeping though

Above: J. M. DeMatteis, now the series writer for the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN.
Below: Bossman Tom DeFalco, the new chronicler for SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN.
(Caricature by Rick Parker)

— but I was never that crazy about it anyway!"

Oh, and one last point: "I'm really the world's worst interview!"

Is it fate when an assistant editor's case of mononucleosis lands you a job at Marvel? And is it luck when you finish another writer's script in a pinch, impress the editor, and land yourself the coveted comicdom gig as the new **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN** writer?

That's the sequence of events that brought Terry Kavanagh on staff at Marvel Comics, and led to his seat on the Spider-Man writing team. And Kavanagh, the luckiest man in comics, continues his streak in April by crossing readers' paths with the **BLACK CAT** limited series.

A former Marvel assistant editor (in the **X-MEN** office), then editor who worked on **EXCALIBUR, NAMOR,** and **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS,** he launched his writing career while still among the editorial ranks. Kavanagh's initial outings were unusual, if not downright odd — he first wrote short comic books that were packaged with toys, "as a favor" to the editor. When he started penning **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN** stories, he picked up where Howard Mackie had left off and met the challenge of completing Mackie's storylines before he could bring something of his own to the book.

Kavanagh noted that he writes action-heavy stories through which he arrives at Peter Parker's inescapable psyche. Although he

Photo by Elliot Brown.

Top: WEB OF SPIDER-MAN scribe Terry Kavanagh. **Bottom:** Howard Mackie, the first ongoing writer for SPIDER-MAN.

favors a hard-hitting approach over quieter intellectual musings, Kavanagh noted, "Spider-Man wears his psychology on his sleeve — he's rife with psychological ramifications!" And Kavanagh works to get to the center of those ramifications, blow-by-blow.

Kavanagh's predecessor on **WEB** has since moved over to **SPIDER-MAN**. Howard Mackie, one of Marvel Editorial's "native sons" and busiest scribes, hails from Cypress Hills, Brooklyn — Ghost Rider turf. "I've weaned myself down to three regular books — **GHOST RIDER** (since #1), **SPIDER-MAN** (his first is #44), and soon, **VENOM."**

An Advertising and Marketing major at NYC's Bernard Baruch College, Mackie worked for an exporting company. Luckily, Mackie exported himself right *out* of his lackluster day job when a friend — today's Superman editor Mike Carlin, then a Marvel Comics editor — tipped him off to an opening at Marvel, as assistant editor to Mark Gruenwald in the Avengers office. Mackie claims that it was his knowledge of *The Twilight Zone* that got him the job.

In the Marvel zone, Mackie , went on to become a full-fledged editor and, after seven years on staff, he embarked on a free-lance career. His first published story was **IRON MAN #211,** and he went on to write **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #84-96** (including the "Name of the Rose" and "Spirits of Venom" storylines).

While he'll continue to write **GHOST RIDER,** Mackie is now finishing up **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE,** which he has written since issue #1, and he recently penned the **GAMBIT** and **BLAZE** limited series. What's it like for a writer to hang out with the Midnight Sons? "All those characters in the **GHOST RIDER** universe . . .dark, grim, gritty — it got sort of depressing! Spider-Man is a good balance to those characters who burn-up Marvel's pages with otherworldly zeal."

And he added a point on which all four Spider-writers enthusiastically agree — "writing about 'an ordinary guy in extraordinary circumstances' opens up limitless storyline possibilities."

– *Lee Ann Stiff*

REMEMBERING ROSS ANDRU

On November 9th, 1993, a legend in the comic industry died.

Ross Andru had drawn comics for 43 years, and his career led him to the adventures of *both* Superman and the Amazing Spider-Man. He had the unenviable task of following John Romita as the regular penciler on **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** beginning with issue #125 (in 1973) and continuing through issue #185 (in 1978).

Romita's first impression of his successor came long before he ever met Ross. Andru and life-long friend and collaborator, Mike Esposito, were penciling and inking, respectively, *Wonder Woman* for DC when Mike called John at Marvel. "Some editor at DC was saying that they loved the way Ross was drawing the book but they didn't like Wonder Woman's face," John recalled. "The editor felt that her face had become formulaic, lacking in grace or something. So they wanted me to do her face for them!"

Romita was excited at the prospect and muddled over the possibilities of working on *Wonder Woman* while still penciling **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN.** Then Mike called him back. "They thought it was a goofy idea. I guess it was a thought that passed their minds and Mike jumped the gun. Ross must have said, 'I don't want people to think I can't draw beautiful women.'"

John loved Ross's approach on Spider-Man. "There was a great intensity about it," he explained. "He cared so much about the characters, the way that I did."

"He was a genius in storytelling," Mike Esposito added. "He didn't have the flow of a Joe Kubert or the finesse of a John Buscema, but his layout and depth were brilliant."

Gerry Conway, who wrote many of the Spider-Man stories Ross penciled, recalled one in particular — the first appearance of the Tarantula. In one scene, the Tarantula was traversing a rooftop during a battle. "Ross had him flipping over pipes, twisting around water tanks, dodging chimneys.

"'Cinematic'. . .that's the only way to describe his work."

Andru had an obsessive eye for realistic detail, and would often carry a camera with him to take pictures of buildings, trains, storefronts, and other elements he would later use in his work. "Ross researched the way a writer did, only with a camera," Conway explained. "One night, Ross came over for dinner and spent much of the time taking pictures on my roof. Other artists would make stuff up, but not Ross. When Spider-Man was swinging over a building, that place really existed."

This obsessive behavior almost got Andru into trouble. One story, introducing the character Mindworm, required a lonely house located at the end of a road in New York's Far Rockaway. Ross actually drew a house that he found in a *cul-de-sac* in that area. The owner of the house threatened to sue Marvel because Spider-Man fans kept appearing at his home, looking for Mindworm.

Andru's cinematic flair, brilliant layouts, and genius for storytelling landed him, as noted by John Romita, "the best challenge for any artist" — penciling the historic first teaming of Superman and Spider-Man, which appeared in 1976 in an oversized treasury edition special written by Gerry Conway. "When I heard that Ross was chosen to do the team-up," Romita said, "I thought, 'he's the right guy to do this book.' I really admired what he did. It was a big project fraught with problems, because there were two editorial groups knocking heads on it, complaining and grumbling. He did a hell of a job. That book was full of life and great panoramic double spreads that made it look like. . .*'WOW!'*"

"He was a decent, honorable human being," Stan Lee recalled, "one of my favorites to work with. I don't remember why he stopped working for us, but wished he hadn't. One day he just wasn't there anymore. His passing is a great loss to the comic book world."

– *Steve Vrattos*

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DRAWING THEM C

SECRETS OF THE

"When Stan Lee created Spider-Man, he changed the lives of all comic book characters forever," **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** artist Sal Buscema said. "Suddenly a super hero could also be a kid in high school who wore glasses and had real problems." More than thirty years later, artists Buscema, Mark Bagley **(AMAZING SPIDER-MAN)**, Tom Lyle **(SPIDER-MAN)**, and Alex Saviuk **(WEB OF SPIDER-MAN)** are continuing to dramatize Peter Parker's philosophical tailspin.

Buscema has been a commercial artist for forty years. Beginning as an Army illustrator for the Engineer Corps Training Branch, he whipped up film strips, charts, and manuals. "The Army was very good for me," he said. "My experience led to an offer from the biggest and best art studio in the Washington area."

Sal has worked exclusively for Marvel for more than twenty-five years. "I'm older than water," he joked. His first job, in 1968, was a ten-page inking assignment for **GUNHAWK**. He's been with **THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** on-and-off since the first issue (1971), and his credits include **THE AVENGERS**, **THOR**, and **THE HULK**.

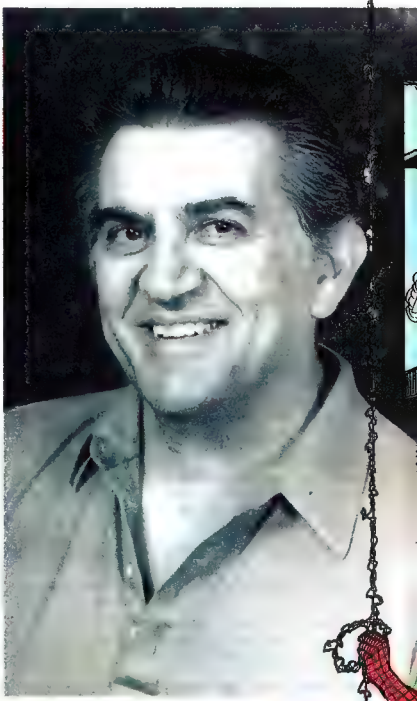
"I don't think there's one character I haven't drawn," Buscema said, "because I always helped out when [an] artist was needed. I'll be doing this until they bury me. My style has been evolving for several years, because my feeling is that art is not a stagnant thing; it must continue to grow. If you don't grow as an artist, you will stagnate and 'die.' Whatever talents you may have been blessed with will leave you.

"Mark Powers and Danny Fingeroth gave me the latitude to go wild," Buscema said of his editors. "They said, 'Do whatever you want. If you go too far, we'll pull you back.'"

As passionate as he is about his art, he's equally enthusiastic about his stage career "I've been acting with local theater groups since 1976," he said. "I've played all the big parts, like Teyve *(Fiddler on the Roof)*, Harold Hill *(The Music Man)* and the king in *The King and I*. In my last show, I played Zorba *(Zorba the Greek)* and the production was reviewed in *The Washington Post*.

"It's like therapy for me, and I come back to my artwork refreshed," he commented "All I do is sit around drawing guys swinging, fighting and punching — it's really wonderful! It's like being a kid again — it recharges my batteries!" Sal says he also enjoys sitting around a house he designed to enclose his studio. While all the artists share his enthusiasm, they agree that their scattered residences keep them *too* far from their peers: Buscema's in Virginia, Saviuk's in Florida, Bagley's in Georgia, and Lyle's in New York.

To the rescue: the annual *Spider-Man Corference*. "For several years, all the artists, writers and editors for Spider-Man have been getting together at a hotel in midtown Manhattan to talk over plot directions in person," Buscema explained. "It's terrific bouncing ideas off each other! At the last one, they had us sequestered — we were chained to the walls — and we came up with something top secret that we hope will knock the socks off the readers.



Above: Sal Buscema and a sample of his web-slinger as seen in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN.
Opposite page: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN penciler Mark Bagley and one of the illustrations he produced for the Fleer *Spider-Man* trading card set.

OUT:
SPIDER-ARTISTS

"Last year Spider-Man was beginning to question his motives," he noted, and Tom Lyle elaborated: "He's been getting a harder edge, becoming nastier and closer to freaking out. Everything that he believes in will be challenged. The storyline after [SPIDER-MAN] #50 will rock the world. . ."

"We're sworn to secrecy," Bagley said. "Readers are gonna hate it, then they're gonna love it, then they're gonna hate it."

". . .His 'long-lost parents' turned out to be frauds, his buddy Harry (Green Goblin) Osborn died. . .and Harry's little baby Norman developed a malevolent glint in his eye," Alex Saviuk elaborated. "Things aren't going exactly well for him and M.J. financially, and he's not sure what he wants to do for himself."

Lyle explained, "[We're] trying to better the X-Men for angst — we're going for a real moody Spider-Man, more often out at night. . .We're going for more of a *film noir* effect, using more shadows, playing with lighting. He'll be moodier — still doing some of his wisecracking on occasion, but it'll be less prominent." Saviuk added, "WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #84, The Fall of the Kingpin," lent itself to a *film noir* look. I change the lighting depending on the mood of a scene.

"You really have to do what's best for a story," Saviuk said. "If you can put a powerful panel on each page without sacrificing storytelling, great." On the other hand, he said, "In WEB #110, I drew a confrontation with the Lizard, one of Spider-Man's oldest enemies, in a number of small panels. . .I chose to do ten or eleven. I'm always making the kind of decision that will move the action along."

Saviuk continued, "Unlike any other hero, when he comes to a flight of stairs, he'll leap and skitter, rather than just run. What would be an unnatural position for a human being is natural for Spider-Man. The bite from the radioactive spider that gave him his powers caused him to be double-jointed. Notice how his spider personality comes out whenever he's about to attack?

"It's fun to challenge myself whenever Spider-Man is once again swinging over the city," Saviuk commented, "and find a worm's-eye view or an aerial view that's never been done before."

Mark Bagley emphasized that he chooses visual elements for AMAZING SPIDER-MAN that are "the most dynamic visually and that tell the story best. There should be a balance between strong visuals and good classic storytelling," he added. "My technique is a cross between line work and contrasting blacks. It's in flux — evolving. It's headed someplace, but I'm not sure where."

Bagley recently penciled the 160-card Spider-Man trading card series for Fleer, to be inked by various artists and colored by Paul Mounts. "I got to draw everybody in the Spider-Man universe," he said. "Some of my favorites were Spider-Man's strangest transformations: the goofy way he looked with six arms, and as Spider-Hulk, and as a giant spider in the Savage Land. It was so cool getting to pick out scenes from Spider-Man's history to redraw."

He said that the two things of which he is most proud

Above: SPIDER-MAN penciler Tom Lyle. **Below:** A self portrait by WEB OF SPIDER-MAN penciler Alex Saviuk.

are "carrying on the tradition of the original book, and my ten-year-old daughter Angie." Bagley's comics career was launched when he won the OFFICIAL MARVEL TRY-OUT BOOK contest and, after a couple of short assignments, he illustrated STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI and the first two years of NEW WARRIORS.

"I feel that I have really big shoes to fill," he added. "Spider-Man was my favorite character when I was a kid, along with Silver Surfer. I bought issues depending on who was doing the art. My main influences were Gil Kane and John Buscema, but you never want to have someone else's style showing through your own; that would be swiping."

Similarly Saviuk mentioned that "the artists I consider most influential on my work are John Romita and Gil Kane. I admire the glamour brought to their work." Lyle noted, "I steer clear of other artistic influences, but I can't help but be influenced by Steve Ditko."

Tom Lyle recently joined the ranks of Spider-artists, and recounted, "When Danny Fingeroth offered me SPIDER-MAN as a regular book, I said, *'Yeeeaaah'*. I'm so proud that I made it to Spider-Man, because I grew up wanting to do that. I'm in fanboy heaven.

"Years ago I entered a 'Design a Character' contest in F.O.O.M. (the 1970's fan magazine *Friends of Ol' Marvel*) #3," Lyle remembered. "Mine was a barbarian called Vulcan, not because of *Star Trek*, but because I named him after the mythological figure. The name was the only thing the two of them had in common. Although my entry was chosen for publication, I didn't see it until years later, when I happened to be browsing in a comic book store. It encouraged me to keep going. . .

"I used to be in advertising for seven years," Lyle continued, "because my parents told me to be realistic. But I happen to have a wife who was crazy enough to encourage me to pursue my dream.

"My first projects were for Eclipse," Lyle revealed, "and then I did DC's *Starman*. Way back, I did two illustrations for the MARVEL HANDBOOK but only one was used — The Constrictor. Danny Fingeroth offered my two really good projects, trying to get me over to Marvel. I turned down the former, because I was not encouraged by the direction of the book, and the latter, because I decided on *Robin* at DC instead."

Lyle, who also worked on the second VENOM limited series, joined the Spider-team in the midst of a particularly eventful time: "Last summer I worked on part of the Maximum Carnage story line. . .that went through all the Spider-Man titles. It was called 'Funeral Pyre.'" As they began working together, he and writer Howard Mackie reviewed their work meticulously. "It was weird," Lyle said. "In some cases, each of us had made notes on the same pages in the same book, even some of the same panels."

All four artists face the challenge of maintaining the intense levels of energy and excitement planned for the coming months. Through advice to young artists, Sal Buscema offered insight into how they will succeed: "*Never* rest on your laurels. No matter how successful you are, in five or ten years things could be totally different if you don't keep up.

"Comics today are exploding," he continued. "The new talents coming into the business are [part of the reason] it's necessary for guys like me to continue to change.

– *Barbara Arnstein*

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[Marvel Age #137]

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All entries must be postmarked no later than July 1, 1994, and must be received no later than July 15, 1994. No purchase is necessary, and there is a limit of **one entry per person.** Employees of the Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. and their family members are not eligible to participate. Winners will be chosen by random drawing, and all winners will be notified by first class mail no later than Sept. 1, 1994. This sweepstakes is sponsored by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. For a list of winners, send a self-addressed-stamped-envelope to the above address. Requests for a list of winners must be received by September 1, 1994. Allow four weeks for delivery.

WHERE ARE THEY

NOW?

Annex: The Augmented Man — Amputee Alex Ellis, a super hero since he donned his hi-tech battle suit

Answer — Former mob enforcer. At large

Bannon, Lance — Staff photographer for the Daily Bugle

Beetle — Villain associated with a loose affiliation of Spider-Man foes. Incarcerated

Black Cat — Felicia Hardy, former burglar, adversary, and sometime partner of Spider-Man. Until recently, dating Flash Thompson

Blood Rose — Alias of Richard Fisk. At large

Brant-Leeds, Betty — Former sweetheart of Peter Parker, now an investigative reporter for *The Daily Bugle*

Boomerang — Member of a loose affiliation of Spidey villains. Incarcerated

Burglar — Thief who killed Ben Parker and thus accidentally led to Spider-Man's crime-fighting career. Deceased

Cardiac — Self-styled, high-tech "hero" who tends to kill those he deems criminals

Carnage — Cletus Kasady, sociopath serial killer infected with an offshoot of Venom's symbiotic alien parasite. Incarcerated at The Vault

Chameleon — Master of disguise, this mercenary has plagued Spider-Man for years, most recently with a plot involving Peter Parker's parents

Cloak and Dagger — Runaway mutant teenagers who obtained powers as a side effect of being forced to take a designer drug. Currently operating out of an abandoned church in New York City to fight crime

Cushing, Kate — City editor for *The Daily Bugle*

Connors, Curt, Dr. — See "The Lizard"

Connors, Martha and Billy — Wife and son of Curt Connors. Living in New York

Daredevil — Costumed adventurer, tends to restrict activities to section of New York called Hell's Kitchen

Demogoblin — Demonic evil half of Hobgoblin, mystically split off from his human self. Currently at large

Doctor Octopus — Dr. Otto Octavius, unstable scientist who gained a symbiotic relationship with a set of metallic arms. Currently incarcerated in the Vault

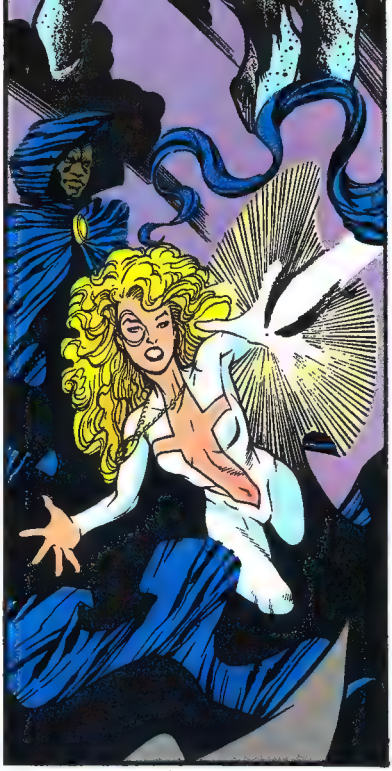
Electro — Incarcerated

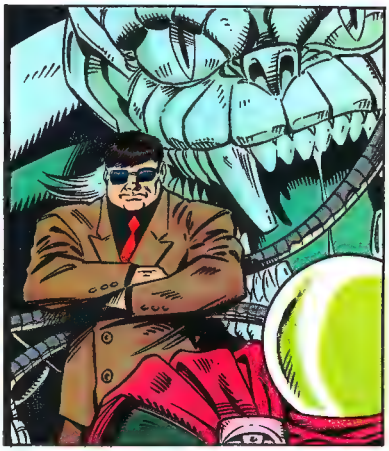
Fisk, Richard — Currently at large under alias of Blood Rose

Fisk, Vanessa — Kingpin's wife. Whereabouts unknown

Foreigner — Mercenary criminal and former husband of Silver Sable. At large

Green Goblin I — Norman Osborn. Deceased





Green Goblin II — Harry Osborn. Deceased

Green Goblin III — Harry Osborn's psychiatrist, Barton Hamilton. Deceased

Grant, Glory — J. Jonah Jameson's secretary at *The Daily Bugle*

Hardshell — Wife of Ringer/Strikeback, organized several Spider-Foes in attempt to avenge her husband (then believed dead). At large

Hardy, Felicia — See Black Cat

Hobgoblin I — *Daily Bugle* reporter Ned Leeds who stumbled on a cache of Green Goblin's effects and revamped them to start his own crime wave. Deceased

Hobgoblin II — Mercenary and former costumed villain Jack O'Lantern. Took over as Hobgoblin after the death of Leeds. At large

Human Torch — Member of the Fantastic Four, longtime friend, and sometimes partner of Spider-Man

Hydro-Man — At large

Jameson, J. Jonah (JJJ) — Publisher, owner, and editor of *The Daily Bugle*

Jameson, John — JJJ's son, former astronaut and pilot for Captain America, recently became head of security for Ravencroft detainment facility for mentally-disturbed super-powered criminals

Kafka, Dr. — Head of Ravencroft, an institution for mentally disturbed criminals, and a psychiatrist who specializes in treating super-powered criminals suffering personality disorders

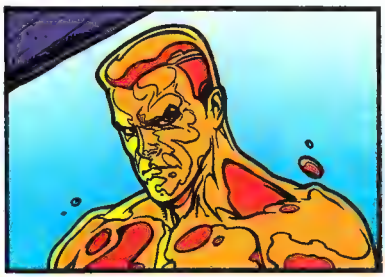
Katzenberg, Nick — Former *Daily Bugle* photographer, under treatment for terminal lung cancer caused by smoking

Kingpin — Wilson Fisk, former leader of the mob in NYC. Presumed deceased

Lizard — Dr. Curt Connors, injected himself with a lizard serum in an attempt to regenerate his lost arm. Transformed into a savage lizard-like creature. Missing and presumed dead

Madison, Maria — Research scientist working at Empire State University and wife of J. Jonah Jameson. Recently threatened to sue for divorce

Mercado, Joy — *Daily Bugle* reporter



Molten Man — Former criminal, Liz Osborn's stepbrother, has reformed and lives in NYC

Mysterio — Incarcerated

Nightwatch — Self-styled super hero who has returned to NYC to fight crime after a self-imposed 10-year exile

Osborn, Norman — The original Green Goblin, father of Harry Osborn. Deceased

Osborn, Harry — Peter Parker's college roommate, became second Green Goblin. Deceased

Osborn, Liz and Norman, II — Harry's widow and son. Have moved away from New York

Parker, Ben — Peter's uncle; deceased

Parker, May — Peter's aunt, living in Queens, NY

Parker, Richard and Mary — Peter's parents, deceased. Recently, dopplegangers planted by The Chameleon posed as the Parkers

Parker, Peter — Freelance news photographer for *The Daily Bugle;* Peter is married to actress/model Mary Jane Watson-Parker, and is secretly Spider-Man

Prowler — One-time criminal who has gone straight and sometimes fights crime

Puma — American Indian mercenary who can transform himself into a cat-person, is Spider-Man's friend or foe, depending on his current agenda.

Punisher — Frank Castle, Vietnam veteran, a vigilante and major thorn in the side of organized crime

Quicksand — At large

Rhino — Member of a loose affiliation of Spidey villains. Incarcerated

Robertson, Joe "Robbie" — Editor-in-chief of *The Daily Bugle*

Rocket Racer — One-time foe of Spider-Man, now attends Empire State University

Sandstorm — Incarcerated

Sandman — Former criminal who has gone straight and now is part of Silver Sable's Wild Pack

Scorpion — Incarcerated

Shocker — Was recently aided by Spider-Man and Night Thrasher when his vibrating power went out of control. Incarcerated

Shriek — Carnage's female partner and lover, currently at large

Silver Sable — A member of the royal family of Symkaria and leader of The Wild Pack, a group of high-tech mercenaries

Solo — Terrorist-hunting vigilante

Spider-Man — See Peter Parker

Stegron — Member of a loose affiliation of Spidey villains. Incarcerated

Strikeback — Formerly the first Ringer, presumed dead, is actually alive and a cyborg. Has been reunited with his wife (Hardshell) and is at large

Thompson, Flash — Estranged high school friend of Peter Parker, until recently dating Felicia Hardy (Black Cat), recovering from beating at the hands of Tombstone

Tombstone — Former mob enforcer, incarcerated

Urich, Ben — Investigative reporter for *The Daily Bugle*, affiliated with Daredevil

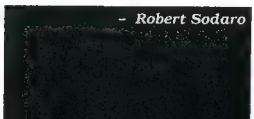
Venom — The combination of an alien symbiote and Eddie Brock, former reporter for *The Globe*. Venom has struck an uneasy truce with Spider-Man and is currently located in San Francisco

Vulture I — Adrian Toomes had been dying of cancer, but recently was invigorated by a device called the Juvinator. The cancer is in remission and his youth was restored

Vulture II — Blackie Drago, Toomes' former cellmate, tricked Toomes into revealing location of Vulture wings. Was forcibly retired when Toomes bested him in pitched battle

Watson-Parker, Mary Jane — Actress/model, wife of Peter. An attempt on her life during a promotional tour left her unharmed but her acting career is in shambles

Watson, Anna — Mary Jane's Aunt, living in Florida



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MOEBIUS (JEAN GIRAUD) JOHN KALISZ **8 MOTHER'S DAY**	BARBARA SLATE MARIA BETANCOURT REBECCA D'SOUZA **9**	ANTHYA FLORES LYNAIRE BRUST STEVE BUCCELLATO **10**	**11**	GEANICE SMITH **12**	ALAN GORDON **13**	**14**
PAUL CURTIS BETTY SIMMS ANITA SHARPE PAMELA BRADFORD **15**	FRED GRAY **16**	STEVE GEIGER **17**	NAMOR BETRAYED BY KRANG!			RICHARD ASHFORD **21**
MARY POPE **22**	JON BOLTON WIN MORTIMER **23 VICTORIA DAY**	EVAN SKOLNICK AL BENSEW **24**	STAN SAKAI **25**	HERB TRIMPE JOHN GALVIN JAMES FELDER **26**	JOHN GOLD SETH DEITCHMAN **27**	MARINA LUM-KANG **28**
29	**30 MEMORIAL DAY**	ANDY YANCHUS LISA GEISENHEIMER **31**	20 YEARS AGO **IRON FIST** DEBUTS IN MARVEL PREMIERE #15			

Up Front

THE PUNISHER, THE TEEN IDOL, AND THE BAT

NEW YORK, NY — February 12: The Punisher is taking his war to the streets of Riverdale and Gotham City in *two* high-profile inter-company crossovers with Batman and Archie Andrews.

New York's Empire Diner hosted a press conference Saturday, February 12, as Marvel Comics and Archie Comics Publications announced perhaps the most bizarre crossover project imaginable — **THE PUNISHER MEETS ARCHIE.** Set for June release, this 48-page (no advertisements) special will be written by Batton Lash *(Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre)*, with art by John Buscema **(PUNISHER WAR ZONE)** and Stan Goldberg *(Archie*, **MILLIE THE MODEL**). There will be two versions, one with a "Marvel-style" enhanced cover (priced at $3.95), the other with an "Archie-style" non-enhanced cover (priced at $2.95).

Born at the 1993 San Diego Comic-Con, it was kept under a strict veil of secrecy prior to the press conference, and was known only as "Project A."

Marvel Comics and DC Comics, Inc., have also announced "Project B." Shipping in June from DC Comics is **BATMAN/PUNISHER: LAKE OF FIRE**, written by Batman editor and writer Dennis O'Neil. Providing the art are penciler Barry Kitson *(Adventures of Superman)* and inker James Pascoe *(L.E.G.I.O.N. '94)*. Shipping in August from Marvel is **PUNISHER/BATMAN**, written by **PUNISHER WAR ZONE** and *Detective Comics* writer Chuck Dixon. Providing the art are penciler John Romita, Jr. **(PUNISHER WAR ZONE, UNCANNY X-MEN)** and inker Klaus Janson **(PUNISHER WAR ZONE**, *Batman/Spawn: War Devil*).

DC's 48-page prestige format one-shot ties in with "Knight's End." Marvel's 48-page bookshelf format one-shot follows the conclusion of "Knight's End." Each issue is self-contained, but the stories are linked thematically.

MARVEL AGE #138, on sale in May, will give the back story of the making of **THE PUNISHER MEETS ARCHIE**, and issue #139 (June) includes an exclusive cover feature on the secrets of the two Punisher/Batman projects.

MARVEL
THE PUNISHER
MEETS
Archie
Archie
I WHEN THERE'S BE A CRISIS-FREE BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
THE TEAM-UP YOU THOUGHT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN — ARCHIE AND THE PUNISHER HOT TO-MEET!

BATMAN is a registered trademark of DC Comics, Inc.
ARCHIE is a registered trademark of Archie Comics Publications.

Top Left: Stan Goldberg and Henry Scarpelli prepared a mock cover to promote the coming crossover. **Bottom Left:** On the stands, John Romita, Jr.'s MARVEL AGE #139 cover will feature a fully-revealed Batman, silhouetted here for security reasons. **Above:** The Punisher and Archie appeared in person at the promotional luncheon that launched the Marvel/Archie team-up. Photo by Steve Seffel.

The Dan Brereton cover for **TRUE BELIEVER #1.**

TRUE BELIEVER

Comic book readers have a better way to plan what Marvel titles they buy — **TRUE BELIEVER**, a new customized consumer version of Marvel's retail catalog, **SALES TO ASTONISH.**

TRUE BELIEVER is bound into the consumer editions of **DIAMOND PREVIEWS, CAPITAL CITY'S ADVANCED COMICS,** and **HEROES WORLDS' SCOREBOARD,** the monthly catalogs made available to comic book stores by comic distributors. Fans who currently purchase these publications will notice that the handful of pages listing Marvel releases has been removed to make way for this new publication. Each **TRUE BELIEVER** will be 32 pages and will have its own new color covers, feature articles, and listings tailored to help fans choose which Marvel titles they wish to follow by giving them concise information on what is happening creatively within each series. The current **TRUE BELIEVER** (available throughout April) lists books found in stores in June, and future issues will continue to list titles three months ahead of release.

A MAN CALLED FRANK

Once again, The Punisher finds himself standing alone in a world full of depraved, evil men in the one-shot special entitled **A MAN CALLED FRANK**, but this one-shot special is not *specifically* about The Punisher. Rather, it's about the sort of man who is *capable* of becoming a vigilante in the most stark sense of the word, and about the events that drive this man to live that kind of a life. In fact, **A MAN CALLED FRANK** doesn't even take place in modern days; it's set in the Old West — a harsh environment where violence is always present and the law is too distant to be of any concern. The title character, Frank, is a solitary man intent on building a life away from the lawlessness that pervades his surroundings. However, brutality has a way of invading even the most serene life, and of driving even the most peaceful person on a mission of vengeance. In **A MAN CALLED FRANK**, that mission will resonate profoundly with the events in the modern day Punisher's life.

A MAN CALLED FRANK is written by Chuck Dixon and illustrated by John Buscema. This 64-page bookshelf special will be cover-priced at $5.95 and is set for release in June.

SEGA AND MARVEL INTERACT

Marvel Comics and video game manufacturer Sega Corporation have announced plans to release a new type of gaming experience called *Interactive Comics*. These innovative hand-held games will incorporate custom-designed X-Men comics and a level of interactive gameplay that will make the reader a *crucial* part of the storyline and its outcome. The reader/player will read the comic book, which is physically attached to a special electronic game base unit and will, at certain points, be required to direct the characters' actions for the story to progress, making choices for the characters (such as which direction characters go), and entering electronic combinations, by keying in desired responses directly onto the comic book page.

Creative teams, price and release dates have not yet been set, though the first two Interactive Comics are currently in production.

FLEER CARDS: A MERRY CHASE

Fleer's latest Marvel Trading Card set, *Fleer Ultra X-Men*, has some special subsets and variant edition cards that will send the complete collector to different locations in search of the full X-Men trading card experience.

There is a variant edition of the Iceman card (#98) — on approximately half of the Iceman cards printed, the card number was inadvertently omitted. Furthermore, the set was produced with five unusual "chase card" subsets that are available in packs and boxes at varying locations. The **"Fatal Attractions Power Blast"** foil set, with art by Lou Harrison, is available only through comic book and card specialty stores and at "TDS" sundry stores (such as *7-Eleven*) that carry cards and magazines. The **"X-Men's Greatest Battles"** set, by various painters, is available *only* in special 14-card packs sold in TDS convenience stores.

The nine-card Brothers Hildebrandt foil set is available in specialty stores and at Wal-Mart. Six silver-foil **"Mutant Crossover"** cards — variant versions of cards found in the regular set — and the final special chase set, two separate red foil X-Men team roster triptychs (one by Ray Lago and one by Bob Larkin), will only be found in Wal-Mart stores.

In addition, the *Spider-Man* trading card set includes an "animation" chase card set. The art for these is printed on special clear plastic, giving it the look of a cartoon animation cel.

Fleer plans to do similar special subsets in the future and, beginning next month, **MARVEL AGE** will include monthly features on Fleer releases, often including exclusive card tips and samples.

LIVING ROOM ACTION

Plans have been announced for the release of two new syndicated cartoons and a bushel of toys featuring some of Marvel's greatest heroes and villains.

The Marvel Action Hour, which will feature two back-to-back cartoons — *The Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*, will be produced by **Marvel Films Animation** and Ron Friedman, a veteran of such cartoons as *G.I. Joe* and *The Transformers*. *The Fantastic Four* will star the traditional line-up of that famous team, and on occasion will feature the Silver Surfer, Galactus, and Doctor Doom. *Iron Man* will feature the character of the same name and will guest-star Force Works (Spider Woman, Scarlet Witch, and U.S. Agent), while their primary villain will be the Mandarin. According to Matt Edelman of Marvel Films, viewers can expect a lot of high-tech action and special effects on both shows.

The Marvel Action Hour is currently being sold into syndication, so viewing channels will vary around the country. It is planned that it will air Sunday mornings beginning in October.

Toy Biz is gearing-up to release several new lines of X-Men toys. In the works are a dozen all-new action figures, each with its own unique action and/or weapons set. There will be two new five-inch-tall Wolverine figures and five-inch figures of Beast, Rogue, Maverick, and the Silver Samurai (among others). There will also be several 10-inch figures, including Bishop and Gambit. Further plans call for a set of *X-Force* figures, a *Black Bird Vehicle Play Set*, and a new type of play set called "Pocket Comics," each of which will include two soft PVC action figures and a battle landscape.

The specific release date for each toy had not been set at press time.

EYE CANDY

Beginning in May, world-renowned fantasy artists Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, and Italian painter Claudio Castillini join the list of top artists who contribute pieces to Marvel's poster program.

Editor Sarra Mossoff has tapped some very talented artists both familiar and new to comic book fans. "Obviously the subject of each poster will be various Marvel characters," Sarra noted, "but the artists are drawing and painting for a wider yet more discerning audience. Comic fans have become familiar recently with the Hildebrandts [widely known for their famous fantasy works] through their work on the Fleer *Ultra X-Men Cards*, but they obviously have a wider audience out there. It's great to see them working together on a project like this.

"Another good example is the *Spider-Man* poster by Glenn Orbik," she continued. "The painting he did for his poster has a photographic quality, yet it still embodies the heroic comic book form." All posters will be 22" x 34", priced at $4.95 each. Those already scheduled include:

MAY:
THE X-MEN VS MAGNETO by Bob Larkin
PUNISHER by Kent Williams
SPIDER-MAN by Glenn Orbik
HULK VS THE THING by Claudio Castillini with Paul Mounts

JULY — SEPTEMBER: The Brothers Hildebrandt series
X-MEN 2099
SILVER SURFER VS THANOS
THE X-MEN

– Jerry A. Novick

John Blaze is no stranger to the road. He and his motorcycle have traveled some of the strangest highways of the Marvel Universe, first as the original Ghost Rider, more recently teamed with Dan Ketch — his successor as Spirit of Vengeance.

Now he's riding solo again in **BLAZE**, his own monthly series premiering in June. Riding solo — but with such able navigational aides as **WOLVERINE** writer extraordinaire Larry Hama and artist Henry Martinez, who is fresh from lending his own unique vision to **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE.** While Editor Bobbie Chase said she planned no more grandiose plots of supernatural villainy of the "Midnight Massacre" scope, future roads within the pages of **BLAZE** will be no less rocky for the Hellfire-cursed super hero. . ."

For example, just in the first year of the series, Hama hopes to pit Blaze against a mysterious and terrifying villain called the Garbage Man, add new and bizarre dimensions to Blaze's carnival cronies, and guest-star Wyatt Wingfoot, the Hulk, Scarlet Witch, and any Marvel Universe member "we can get our filthy meat hooks on!"

According to Chase, the concept for a **BLAZE** solo series was born when Howard Mackie expressed that he wanted to concentrate all his writing attention on **GHOST RIDER** and **SPIDER-MAN.** But Chase still felt the timing for a **BLAZE** solo title couldn't be better.

"Howard was having a hard time doing both a **GHOST RIDER** book and a Ghost Rider-Blaze book, separating the two thematically," she said. "Larry and I worked together for years on **G.I. JOE** and I really

loved working with him. I had been looking for an opportunity to work with him again, and Howard loved Larry's writing, too. If he was going to give up his baby to anybody, he really wanted it to go to Larry."

As they were closing out **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE**, the action was spiralling to a logical conclusion perfect for the launch of the new series. Stressing that Blaze would leave **SPIRITS** as a super hero with a very hardened view of reality, Chase would only reveal that Blaze is yet again separated from his family and on less than speaking terms with the newly resurrected Dan Ketch.

"Because of events in **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE**, Blaze [has been] separated from Ghost Rider," Chase offered. "The **BLAZE** limited series ends nicely, and then we're *really* mean to the readers in the last **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE.** Stuff happens to [Blaze] and to his family that makes it impossible for him to stick around and be a teammate with the current Ghost Rider. He's sort of considered poison."

Ghost Rider *will* guest-star in **BLAZE**, but Chase assured that any appearance would not come any time soon, though Hama has dreams of teaming Blaze, Ghost Rider, Wolverine, and Punisher as "the baddest biker crew on the face of the planet!" She also said that readers should not under *any* circumstances expect to find the same tone in **BLAZE** as in **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE.**

"It's not the same series at all," she stressed, brimming with excitement about the character's new direction. "There are major reasons why **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE** is going away because John and Ghost Rider can't be together. We're changing the flavor of the series very much. Larry has got some great ideas. We're developing some new stuff with his powers, along the lines of what exactly it is that the Hellfire can do. And Blaze will have some abilities he didn't have before."

And a full face, once again. One of the first steps for Chase and Hama is to dispose of the mask he has been wearing recently (to hold in check the Hellfire under his skin). "I'm reverting him back to his old outfit, getting rid of the mask, back to leather jacket, shades, dangling cigarette, two-day stubble — the cool look," Hama said, adding that the character will be brimming with "*attitude.*"

Providing a catalyst for his new adventures will be Blaze's return to his old haunt, the recently demolished Quentin Carnival. He will be helping to rebuild the traveling attraction as the *Carnivale Quintano* or, as Hama provocatively titled the first story arc — "The Carnival of Lost Souls." He added that he hopes to make the carnival a "character" in its own right. "It moves out on the road like a beehive on trailers," he teased. "It is a weird carnival with unusual attractions and something uncanny about it. People are changed by it."

Indeed the entire geography of the series will promise to be somewhat odd if Hama and Chase have their way about it. While the carnival appears to traverse the traditional Marvel Universe, according to Hama, familiar locales will be viewed through a filter of the characters' stunted senses of reality. For example, in his words, "Blaze. . .now sees the world through the flame of Hellfire.

"Blaze and the carnival denizens enter the underworld of living outcasts," he continued. "They don't go into McDonalds; they go into strange greasy spoons where alien winos feed. They shunt from one inbred gene pool to another on the bizarro highway."

Hama added that the stories themselves would be "closer to tone poems than anything else. I'm going for a very dark, moody take on the character."

One reason for his moodiness is, of course, the disappearance of his family from his life, although both Hama and Chase prefer to be mysterious for now about what has *exactly* happened to his two children, Craig and Emma, and when Blaze might see them again. "My fix on the situation is to put the family in another place in quasi-jeopardy and make them be a story element, but not ever be seen," offered Hama. "But that makes them a major motivational factor."

Putting all the aforementioned elements together, Chase characterized the title as a cross between the old Leonard Nimoy TV series *In Search Of*, *Twin Peaks*, and *Freaks* (the 1932 Todd Browning-directed movie about carnival side show freaks). Chase stressed, though, that the plots would be much more *super hero-oriented* than horror, breaking away from the supernatural villains who terrorized the first two years of John Blaze's return in **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE** and the

recent **BLAZE** four-part limited series. Blaze would be battling more, in Hama's words, "real-world" — as opposed to supernatural — villains, but using his supernatural Hellfire powers to do so.

"We're steering clear of a lot of the mysticism of the last year in the Midnight Sons books and going more into 'dark corner of the Marvel Universe' stories in which Blaze will be the primary supernatural force of the book," said Chase.

"If it's supernatural, it would be in the effect that he is going up against a serial killer who believes himself to be supernaturally enhanced and offering up sacrifices to a dark power," Hama explained, referring to the series' first story arc. "I'm not saying anything about whether or not that power exists or works, just that the wacko *thinks* it does, and that causes its own specific flux and ether. You can't really get away from the supernatural because the whole basis of the character is supernatural. The attack is to take it so that the character uses a supernatural power but not necessarily against supernatural opponents."

explicable connection to the new villain, Ice Box Bob, will become a major permanent supporting cast member.

"The first arc is going to involve really establishing Blaze's character and setting the tone, beefing up the carnival characters and the real feel of the carnival," Hama said. "That's the backdrop upon which we establish the look and the nature of the book."

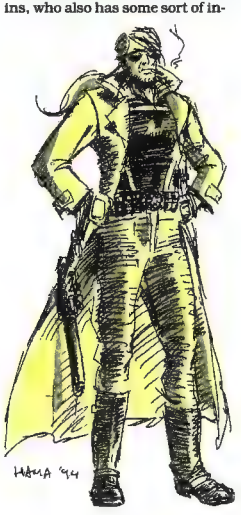
At press time, Hama was still trying to decide which carnival characters from past Blaze adventures would be returning. He did stress, however, that Blaze's carney friends would be playing a much larger role in this series than in the past. "I'm going to give the core of characters that already exist more presence and actually fit them in the storyline rather than have them just pop up as sounding boards," he noted.

He could say that each character would have some sort of "quest" to fulfill. He added that Kody would be subject to a *major* change, and that Clara would finally gain her ability to see, but with "a terrible catch."

"The old rusty pickup truck driven

"Clara opens her package and finds that it contains a jar with a pair of human eyes floating in it."

The first plotline will also introduce Holden Blevins, whom Hama described as "a rather mysterious and unusual ten-year old boy." Blevins, who also has some sort of in-



by Schenker — who runs the store by the lake and is the local postmaster — drops off a package for Clara," Hama said. "Clara opens her package and finds that it contains a jar with a pair of human eyes floating in it. She opens the jar and the eyes send tendrils up into her head and drag themselves into her skull, fusing themselves in place. She can see, but it is a world of horror she sees!"

He added that only Blaze and Clara can see Holden Blevins.

Indeed, sight could be considered a quintessential element to Hama's approach to any of his writing projects, and he stressed that **BLAZE** is no exception. Having broken into comics as a penciler, he added that he always approaches any title he writes from the point of view that comics is a "visual" medium.

"I'm basically a penciler who writes, so I have never looked at comics as being a writing form," he explained. "If I don't like the art, I'm not interested. So. . .my approach to writing is to formulate stories in terms of pictures. Most writers think in terms of ideas. They might as well be writing prose. The thing that always bugged me about plots that I was given when I was a penciler was that 80 percent of it would be boring stuff to draw. If I was bored drawing it, then people were going to be bored looking at it. So the thing I'm always trying to overcome when I write a plot is to write about visual images that I would like to draw myself, and hopefully the penciller will have a lot of fun drawing. If all the creators involved really get a charge out of what they're doing, that is the piece of magic that jumps out across the page."

Hama admitted that it is often hard for him to explain in detail what he has planned for months of continuity or to describe his characters. "If you asked me that of Wolverine, I couldn't tell you, and people say I've got a really good take on the character," he said. "I can do a character, but I can't explain how I do it. You ask certain artists, 'how do you draw like that?' I don't know. I just do it."

What can he say then to sum up his approach to **BLAZE**?

"I will endeavor to devise the most lurid, gonzo, riveting, out-there, violent, mind-boggling, gut-wrenching. . .in your face *visual images*, strung together in a structure of hyper-dynamic story-telling."

If this comment provides the reader any clue, it guarantees this will be one *Hellfire* of a road trip in the offing.

- Anya Martin

MARVEL LIMITED

If Leonardo DaVinci had painted a thousand Mona Lisas, why go to the Louvre? If Michelangelo had made a regular habit of painting chapel ceilings, would the Sistine Chapel be such a big deal?

Rarity, in addition to quality, makes a piece of art highly desirable. Marvel Comics, recognizing this fact, is developing a line of special collectors' items. These will reprint some of the most beloved and sought after stories that Marvel has published since the debut of **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** in 1961 in special formats designed to appeal to the serious afficionado, and because these items will only be released in limited quantities, the imprint will be called *Marvel Limited*.

Marvel Limited is the brain child of Sven Larsen, director of Marvel's marketing team. In developing the Marvel Limited line, Larsen had two objectives. First, he wanted to develop a product that would be a step *beyond* the most elegant products that Marvel has heretofore produced — such as the **MARVEL MASTERWORKS** series and the two-volume reprint set of 1940's Captain America stories. Second, he wanted to reward the comic book retailers, who have played such an important role in Marvel's phenomenal growth during the last decade. In supplying these dealers with limited numbers of deluxe editions of special Marvel stories, Sven was "killing two birds with one stone." Here was a product that both collectors *and* retailers would love.

To bring this ambitious project to fruition, Marvel tapped the skills of neo-Editor Mariano Nicieza, who revealed that the key word that he would use to describe the Marvel Limited line would be "classy." It will consist of hardcover books — some of them leather bound and some with slip cover — with all kinds of extras: "The works," as Nicieza expressed it. "These books, because they will have a limited run, will have as a target audience the Marvel "connoisseur."

The Marvel Limited line will begin appearing in May 1994. The first book to appear is **FANTASTIC FIRSTS**, a mammoth volume — 384 pages — featuring the first issues and the first appearances of every major Marvel hero from the debut of The Fantastic Four to the appearance of The Silver Surfer. In other words, the volume spans the Stan Lee/Jack Kirby/Steve Ditko era of Marvel comics, a period of extraordinary explosive creativity and excitement. The edition will be leather-bound with a special bookmark, foil stamping, and vellum chapter divides. Also included will be special introductions by many of the original writers and artists, and by today's hottest talents.

Scheduled for June 1994 is a volume featuring the work of writer/illustrator Frank Miller — **THE COM-**

POTENTIAL UNLIMITED

PLETE FRANK MILLER SPIDER-MAN. This book will contain those stories that were written, plotted and/or drawn by Miller, some in conjunction with other talented creators (such as Denny O'Neil). Included in the volume will be **MARVEL TEAM-UP #100** (teaming Spidey with The Fantastic Four, and introducing Karma of **THE NEW MUTANTS** fame), **MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL #4** (teaming Spidey with Daredevil, Moon Knight, Iron Fist, and Power Man), **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #14** (teaming Spidey with Doctor Strange against Doctor Doom and The Dread Dormammu) and **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #15** (featuring Doctor Octopus and The Punisher). There will also be a special cover gallery of Miller Spider-Man covers from **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** and **MARVEL TEAM-UP.**

Another special project coming from Marvel Limited is a deluxe hardcover edition of the recent Kurt Busiek/Alex Ross **MARVELS** limited series. That highly-praised series retells the history of the Marvel Universe through the eyes of an on-the-street news photographer. The stunning painted pages by Alex Ross made the limited series one of the most widely read projects of 1993-'94, and this limited hardcover edition is expected to follow suit.

Marvel Limited will also be issuing a special hardcover edition of **FUTURE IMPERFECT**, a tale of The Incredible Hulk by Peter David and George Perez, colored by Tom Smith. This 112-page volume will include pages not found in the original limited series, including new artwork by George Perez, character sketches and a wraparound dust jacket.

Among the other project slated for release in the near future are two additional projects featuring the work of the multi-talented Frank Miller. The first will be a hardcover deluxe edition of the recent Miller/John Romita, Jr., limited series **THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR**, retelling the origin of Daredevil and adding previously-unknown information about Hornhead's formative years, including his first meeting with Elektra. The second Miller project will be a hardcover reprint of Miller's acclaimed initial run of the monthly **DAREDEVIL** series in which Miller introduced Elektra and redefined The Kingpin, thus making him the definitive Daredevil foe.

Other Marvel Limited volumes in the works include **THE X-MEN'S GREATEST BATTLES, THE VERY BEST OF SPIDER-MAN**, and a hardcover collection of Mark Texiera's **SABRETOOTH** limited series. Each of these projects will be high quality collectors' items and will feature many extras.

Nicieza concluded by saying that the Marvel Limited line has been specifically tailored for those fans who want and can afford the best that comics has to offer.

– Sandy Hausler, J.D.

Mermaids, Monsters & Magic Carpets

DISNEY'S CARTOON COMICS

This may be the "Year of the Buzz" on MTV, but in the magical world of make-believe, 1994 will be the year of mermaids, monsters and magic carpets. Beginning in July Marvel Entertainment and The Walt Disney Company pool their collective artistic resources to create the newest line in a series of joint comic book ventures. Drawing on some of Disney's most recent successes, this project will highlight both award-winning, animated motion pictures, and contemporary television cartoons, and will be directed at markets largely unexplored by Marvel.

Heading the editorial end of the project is **BARBIE** Editor Hildy Mesnik, whose familiarity with alternative markets will prove an asset. According to Mesnik, "Marvel has been interested in both girls' and younger children's markets for some time, and Disney had these properties that they wanted to foster, but wanted the experts to do it. What other, better marriage could there be for a line of Disney comics than [with] Marvel?" Having worked on **BARBIE** and **THE CONEHEADS** — products directed at markets outside Marvel's distribution to comic book stores — Mesnik is a likely candidate to oversee this union. "I have an affinity for the Disney and children's projects," she commented. "Not only that, but I can still think like a kid, and so for me it's all a lot of fun."

This venture into new territory may prove challenging to both companies, whose experience with one another is still new. "It's a gamble, a real risk," Mesnik noted, "but, if these books are successful, then we can expand even further into children's comics."

Hopes run high for the success of this undertaking off the beaten comic book path. Marvel Specialty Sales Vice President Jim Sokolowski pointed out, "Our readership is basically male. While **BARBIE** is the ideal comic book for young girls, it gets buried on the rack with all the other super hero products." Thus, Sokolowski's task will be to draw the attention of an entirely new audience.

The selections of forthcoming series should allay any fears. To date, the list includes box office heavyweights such as **THE LITTLE MERMAID**, **BEAUTY & THE BEAST**, and **ALADDIN**, as well the upcoming film, **THE LION KING**, Disney's newest animated feature, due out in theaters in June 1994. The three based on the earlier, award-winning films, according to Sokolowski, "have become marketing phenomena. They sell tons of toys, and have popular characters." With these achievements to their credit, these books promise a significant appeal in diverse markets.

The question for both Marvel and Disney now becomes, how do they intend to capitalize on the international charm of these films?

BEAUTY & THE BEAST will begin with a four-part series, and the others will be monthly, ongoing titles. "We'll be working very closely with Disney," she explained. "There's going to be extra effort at the beginning so that we can see what they want, and they can see how we work. Once we get the first few issues out, it'll be a lot easier. With each progressive issue, we'll know more about what Disney likes and doesn't like. In that way, we'll produce comics that match the high standards of both companies."

Both Marvel and Disney have batted around ideas, and some basic premises have been given the go-ahead. "**THE LION KING** will be the first one out of the box. . .in May 1994, before the movie," Sokolowski said. Although it might seem an unusual strategy to precede the film's release with the comic book adaptation, Sokolowski explained, "My instinct is, basically, that any time we do any kind of movie adaptation, it usually comes out too late. After you've seen the movie, there's no real reason to read the comic book, but if you read the comic book first, you'll still want to go see the movie."

While **THE LION KING** will be a 48-page adaptation of the film (written by Bobbi JG Weiss and drawn by Sparky Moore), **BEAUTY & THE BEAST**, however, will be an entirely new story. Already in the early plotting stage, it is going to take place before the Beast becomes a prince. This series, set within the Beast's castle, will focus on Belle (Beauty) and the time she spent there. During this visit, all the objects in the castle, like the teapot and the candlestick, will try desperately to make her fall in love with the Beast. Characters such as Gaston and Maurice, as well as notable townsfolk, will also make guest appearances. Barbara Slate, also of **BARBIE FASHION** and *Ms. Liz* fame, has been designated to do the writing for **BEAUTY & THE BEAST** and is, in Mesnik's opinion, "wonderful. She has terrific ideas and is perfectly suited to write **BEAUTY & THE BEAST**." Said Mesnik, "One of the goals of *this* particular series is to create tales that continue from month to month, but can *also* stand

"THE SKY'S THE LIMIT, IT'S RIPE FOR ADVENTURE STORIES."

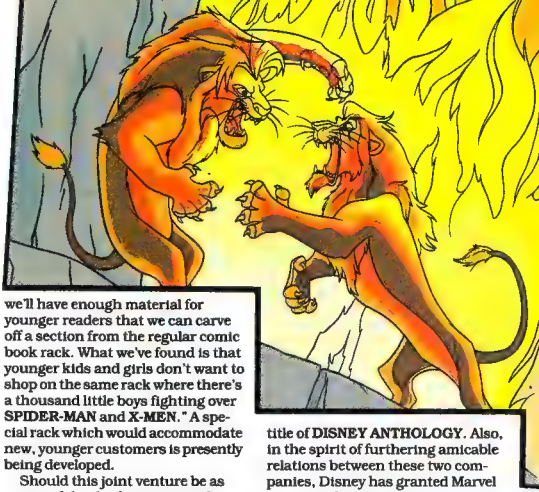
alone so that a young child will be able to enjoy an issue without having read the previous one." Together, these elements will allow the series to jibe with the continuity established by the film, and thus maintain the integrity of the original story at the same time as it provides new and interesting material.

ALADDIN, on the other hand, will pick up the adventures of the young street thief where the movie left off. The film's supporting cast — including beautiful Jasmine, mischievous Abu, the magic carpet, and the powerful-yet-bumbling Genie, will all be along for the ride on this one which, in Editor Mesnik's opinion, is the kind of project where, "You can do pretty much anything. The sky's the limit — it's ripe for adventure stories." The first issue will kick-off with veterari Disney writer Lee Nordling and Marvel artist Chuck Frazier penciling, and many writers and artists have expressed interest in contributing to the series as it continues. While the series will coincide with the upcoming *Aladdin* television cartoon program premiering next fall, "we have the latitude to go beyond what's taking place in the cartoon," Mesnik declared.

Similarly, the premise of **THE LITTLE MERMAID**, the fourth — and to-date final — motion picture-based series, has yet to be determined. Writer Trina Robbins and artist Mary Wilshire (both of **BARBIE**) will form the creative team for the debut, and story ideas for the continuing undersea adventures of Ariel are being discussed.

As noted, Marvel will branch off into new areas of distribution for this undertaking. Editor Mesnik's expressed the opinion that, "It's essential that we explore new markets," and in order to expand upon Disney's vast sphere of influence, "we're looking into the newsstands, school catalogs, the Disney Stores and theme parks, and book stores."

With venues as variant as these, Marvel plans to appeal to a wider, more diverse audience — one which includes girls, a reader group Mesnik feels Marvel has yet to really tap into. Of course, this attention to newer markets doesn't mean that Direct Sales comic book stores will be ignored. Mesnik pointed out that, "In Direct Sales stores there is a plan in the works — in conjunction with other publishers — to rack the books with other children's titles. As a result of this higher visibility, parents who go in to buy their own comics could buy **THE LITTLE MERMAID** for their daughters and younger children at the same time." Sokolowski agreed, saying that, for traditional newsstand and magazine outlets, "With the Disney products,



we'll have enough material for younger readers that we can carve off a section from the regular comic book rack. What we've found is that younger kids and girls don't want to shop on the same rack where there's a thousand little boys fighting over **SPIDER-MAN** and **X-MEN**." A special rack which would accommodate new, younger customers is presently being developed.

Should this joint venture be as successful as both companies hope, future projects may see fruition. Sokolowski opined, "If we can get them reading comics, then as they grow older — whether they're male or female — hopefully, they'll move on to other [titles]." This in mind, plans are already being made to publish comic book versions of Disney's contemporary cartoons, such as *Darkwing Duck*, *Bonkers* and *Goof Troop*, in a series with a working title of **DISNEY ANTHOLOGY**. Also, in the spirit of furthering amicable relations between these two companies, Disney has granted Marvel access to the Disney Library, therefore providing Marvel with the option to publish comics based on classic Disney films, as well. Said Sokolowski, "Disney has the ability to reach the hearts and minds of the younger kids; the Marvel imprint can't hurt either."

Mermaids, monsters and magic carpets, huh? *Now that's a buzz!*

- Benjamin Raab

THE DISNEY DEBUTS

THE LION KING -- May

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST-- July

THE LITTLE MERMAID -- July

ALLADIN -- August

DISNEY ANTHOLOGY -- September

TOY MECCA

Toy Fair photographs by Anna Harper.

Four Freedoms Plaza. Avengers Mansion. The Daily Bugle Building. *1107 Broadway.* Any fan will recognize the first three Manhattan addresses, but the last?

It's the address of the Toy Center, and from February 13-23, it was one of the busiest addresses in the Marvel Universe. The 91st Annual American International Toy Fair, the biggest toy industry trade show in America, took up both the Toy Center and space in New York's Jacob Javits Convention Center. While this year's attendance figures were not available at press time, the Toy Manufacturers Association (TMA) estimated that this year's numbers surpassed the 22,000 persons who visited the fair last year, and more than 1,600 exhibitors showed their 1994 lineups — an increase of about 100. According to Jodi Levin, TMA Communications Director, "The most amazing thing about this year's show was that everybody made it despite the weather."

Marvel's Director of Licensing Lisa Geisenheimer noted, "We were triple booked in terms of seeing people. We were a 'must see' on everyone's list." What was it that made the toy buyers, advertisers, licensees, and other attendees line up to visit the House of Ideas as never before?

In 1993, The Marvel Entertainment Group took top entertainment honors with superlatives like the top action figure line *(Marvel Super Heroes)*, the number one Saturday morning show *(X-Men)*, and America's top selling comic book line. But the masses didn't brave the winter storms to see what Marvel did *last year.* They came to find out what was in store for 1994.

This is the first year that Toy Biz, a partly-owned subsidiary of Marvel Entertainment under the creative leadership of Avi Arad, will be Marvel's primary toy producer. "Avi Arad is the [field's] most prominent, well-known, and innovative toy designer," Geisenheimer noted, and Arad has put his flair to work designing new product lines based on Marvel's comics and animated series (as well as non-Marvel concepts). This has been facilitated by his position as Marvel Films chief executive officer.

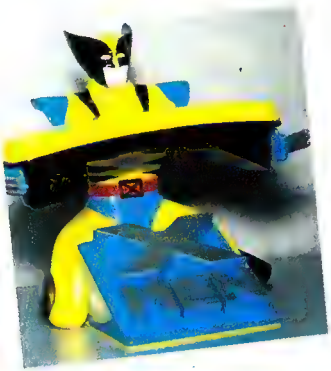
Toy Biz unveiled a new, expanded showroom and 1994 lines that include more than 50 new X-Men action figures and a new Spider-Man action figure line set to begin with 20 figures. They also premiered *Pocket Comics* — a series of eight X-Men and four Spider-Man miniature play-environments, each with two miniature action figures, an interactive setting, and a collectible trading card.

For many, this was also the first look at *Steel Mutants*, eight sets of highly detailed, poseable die-cast mini metal action figures (two per set). Spider-Man was represented by *Web Of Steel*, four sets featuring Spider-Man vs. Venom, Hobgoblin, Carnage, or Dr. Octopus.

Other launches included X-Men and Spider-Man *Projectors*,

94

Opposite, top: Wolverine and The Beast are among the action figures displayed in the 1994 Toy Biz catalog as part of the expanded X-Men and X-Force lines.
Opposite, bottom: At Toy Fair, Avi Arad (Toy Biz chief executive officer) demonstrates the fun of the *Venom Dress-Up Set*. The Spider-Man toys were prominently featured in the launch of a major new toy line featuring the web-slinger and his foes.
Right: Towering over the other action figures, The Sentinel captures Bishop in the mutant section of the Toy Biz showroom.



action figures with built-in slide projectors, each including three "adventure wheels" containing images from the cartoons. Play sets, action vehicles, and plush figures rounded out the new product offerings and, according to Arad, this marked the point at which "the action figure business is gone as it existed before. It's a whole new business, by [virtue of] going to 10" super size action figures, which were a giant success at the show, by introducing *Pocket Comics*, which never existed before, by releasing *Steel Mutants*, which are a blowout at retail already. . .It's a gestalt, a total mind-set."

The Toy Biz showroom was also home to Marvel Software, Fleer Corp., and Marvel Comics. **Marvel Software** debuted with two video games: one based on the upcoming *Spider-Man* animated series, the other based on Wolverine. These are the first video games produced "in-house" at Marvel, and both are scheduled for fall 1994 release. Fleer displayed upcoming card lines, including the Fleer *Ultra X-Men* cards, and whetted buyers appetites for the super premium Fleer *Flair Marvel Chronicle* cards currently in production. **Marvel Comics** representatives, including Lisa Geisenheimer, Bonnie Berryman, and Wendi Daniels, met buyers and licensees in a room designed to represent the ultimate "Marvelized" kid's bedroom, showcasing items from sheets and pillowcases to porcelain bisques and Horizon models.

Margaret Trujillo, Marvel's Director of Corporate Marketing, commented, "We were there to show retailers new toy lines and tell them about all the exciting and innovative things Marvel's doing in entertainment. We also met with current and potential promotional partners to show them why Marvel is the hottest product on the market."

Pressman Toy introduced two new board games, following their first award-winning *X-Men* board game (1992) as a cross between role-playing and board games. *X-Men: Crisis in the Danger Room* (for players ages 5-8) features Cyclops, Gambit, Wolverine, and Beast taking on villains like Juggernaut, Magneto, Sabretooth, and Apocalypse. It has a multi-layered board which players build during the course of the game, and it sports a cover by Dave Ross. The game for ages 9-adult leans even more toward role-playing, and is called *Xavier Institute Under Siege*. Players choose from among 20 playable X-Men to pit them against a multitude of X-Men villains. "It's very tough — a step beyond board games," Marvel Creative Services Art Director Mike Thomas explained. The game has a cover by Jordan Raskin.

Top: Action figures maintain a high profile in the Spider-Man section of the Toy Biz catalog. **Middle:** The *Daily Bugle* play set from Toy Biz. **Bottom left:** The REC Sound *Wolverine Telephone*. **Bottom right:** The Spider-Man display in the Toy Biz showroom vividly makes the connection between the action figures, the comic books, and the upcoming animated series.

Buyers caught a glimpse of a few of model-maker **Horizon's** upcoming releases in the Marvel showroom, including Spider-Man and The Green Goblin (currently available) and, according to Thomas, the Goblin is "nothing short of inspired." Further 1994 Horizon releases include Rogue, Bishop, Gambit, Sabretooth, and Storm.

Tyco premiered a new *X-Men Wolverine* remote-controlled battery-powered car and an *X-Men Electric Racing: Wolverine vs. Sabretooth* introductory electronic racetrack. According to Thomas, "Both Wolverine cars are the same — very stylized. Tyco is an expert in the field of fantasy race cars, and we tried to keep the cars as close to the characters as we could. If these work out, we'll roll out next year with an upscale version of the racetrack."

Colorforms introduced a *Spider-Man Adventure Set*, as well as an *X-Men Adventure Set* based on the mainstream books, with some of the character figures and a background drawn by Ron Lim. They also presented a color-by-numbers set, an *X-Men* marker/poster color set made up of X-MEN covers by Jim Lee and Andy Kubert, and *X-Men Party Packs*, *Play Putty*, and *Stick Balls*. Spider-Man Colorforms products will include *Spider-Man Play Putty* and *Stick Balls*.

Viewmaster premiered a new set of three X-Men reels based on the animated series. **TSR Games**, producers of the famed *Dungeons and Dragons*, is planning Midnight Sons and 2099 modules for the popular *Marvel Super Heroes* role-playing games series, with release dates to be determined after Toy Fair.

There were presentations by **Paper Magic** and **Ero Industries**, each unveiling new lines of Marvel-related products. Paper Magic showed exchange Valentine cards and stickers, and Ero Industries exhibited a line of backpacks, slumber bags, and play tents featuring the X-Men and Spider-Man.

Assessing Marvel's successes at Toy Fair '94, Margaret Trujillo noted, "The expansiveness of the offerings this year had retailers and promotional partners realizing that Marvel has *exploded* in the marketplace, and will be a huge force moving forward in the youth entertainment industry." Lisa Geisenheimer added, "Every dealer from *K-Mart* to *FAO Schwarz* was incredibly excited. . . this is going to be an amazing year for us."

"This is Marvel's Toy Fair," Mike Thomas noted. "Last year we were there, and everyone was blown away by the Toy Biz showroom. But this year, they're taking us to a new level in quality and quantity. It's gonna be unbelievable."

– *Jeffrey Simons*

Top: The Toy Biz catalog introduces *Pocket Comics*—a new step in the evolution of action figures. **Middle:** Spider-Man action figure accessories include the *Smythe Spider-Slayer*. **Bottom left:** Visitors to the Toy Biz showroom find an example of the ultimate Marvel fan bedroom. **Bottom right:** *Yikes! The Electronic Talking Spider-Man.*

UPCOMING RELEASE DATES

COLORFORMS:

X-Men Stick Ball	May
X-Men Party Packs	June
Spider-Man Standard Playset	August
Spider-Man, X-Men Play Putty	August
Spider-Man Stick Ball	September

ERO INDUSTRIES:

X-Men Backpacks	July/August
X-Men Slumber bags, Play Tents	May

HORIZON [MODELS]:

Green Goblin	March
She-Hulk, Cable	April/May
Sabretooth	June
Rogue, Bishop, Beast	Summer/Fall
Gambit, Storm	Fall
Silver Surfer	Christmas

PAPER MAGIC:

X-Men, Spider-Man, Marvel Universe Valentine cards and stickers	November

PRESSMAN:

Xavier Institute Under Siege	May
X-Men: Crisis in the Danger Room	May

TOY BIZ:

Marvel Super Heroes, X-Men Action Figures	April
X-Force Action Figures	July
X-Men, X-Force Action Figures (individual & 2-paks)	Sept.
Deluxe 10" X-Men Action Figures	April
" "	Aug.
" "	Oct.
Metallic 10" X-Men Action Figures	May
Deluxe 10" X-Force Action Figures	August
Steel Mutants	May
X-Men Pocket Comics	June
X-Men Projectors	May
Sentinel	Sept.
Blackbird Jet	July
Spider-Man Action Figures	July
" "	Sept.
" "	Oct.
Deluxe 10" Spider-Man Action Figures	July
" "	Sept.
Spider-Man Pocket Comics, Web-of-Steel	Aug.
Spider-Man Projectors	Oct.
Tri-Spider Smasher, Smythe Battlechair	Sept.
Hobgoblin Wing Bomber	Sept.
Spider-Man Plush	July
Electronic Talking Spider-Man, Venom	Sept.
Dress-Up Sets: Spider-Man, Venom	Oct.

TSR:

Midnight Sons Module	TBD
2099 Module	TBD

TYCO:

Wolverine RC Car	May
Electric Racing: Sabretooth vs. Wolverine	July

Top: The Marvel fan bedroom includes Horizon's new *Spider-Man* model kit. **Middle:** Toy Biz Research and Development Director Ron McArdle hangs out with friends at the Toy Biz showroom, on-hand to answer any questions concerning the toys he has designed. **Bottom:** The Horizon catalog features a shot of the *Green Goblin* model kit.

LETTERS? HULK SMASH! LETTERS

Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Attention, correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

This month's slightly savage letter column title comes to us from John Gavalos of Montreal, Quebec in the Great White North. Thanks a bunch, John! Of course, the Hulk generally talks in full sentences these days.

And now that we've got your attention, let's take this opportunity to remind everyone that we still need a spiffy new title for this column each and every month. So think 'em up and send 'em in! If we use one of your ideas, we'll thank you in this very space. And if you don't send any in, well, we could always give the Hulk your address...

Dear Marvel Council,

First, I want to say that you guys and gals are doing an excellent job by bringing us fans the best work you create every year, and I'm sure a lot of other fans would say the same thing. For example, I love the work and character(s) of **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, SPIDER-MAN, SPIDER-MAN 2099, THE AVENGERS, AVENGERS WEST COAST, THE INCREDIBLE HULK, SHE-HULK, THE FANTASTIC FOUR,** and **THE X-MEN** and the other X-titles.

I'm also looking forward to seeing the new rendition of **EXCALIBUR.** That's another X-title that I love.

Second, there's something I've been thinking about for a while now. There are many mutants and X-titles that have ties to the X-Men or at least a strong history with the X-Men. Even the famed mighty non-mutant group The Avengers has close ties to the X-Men. How come there isn't a storyline coming out that shows that Spider-Man, Spider-Woman, and the Black Widow have a history together because of their spider backgrounds? I don't know about the rest of the Marvel fans out there, but I would love to read a story that involves three of the most popular spider characters that Marvel has. You can probably call it "Spiderties" and even bring back the Tarantula, Carnage, Doppleganger, and of course throw in Venom. Plus, for an even greater story, throw in Deathweb (from the pages of Spider-Woman).

So that's all I have to say, except keep up the good work, Mighty Marvel Council. Until Bloodties becomes Spiderties, make mine Marvel.

Kelly Patton
901 Gretna Blvd., #5
Gretna, LA 70056

Actually, Kelly, the facts that we already have about the origins and backgrounds of Spider-Man, Spider-Woman, and the Black Widow pretty much rule out the possibility of their having a common origin or history. Spidey got his powers from a radioactive spider at a science demonstration in New York, while Spider-Woman's stomping grounds have always been the Midwest and West Coast, and the Black Widow received her training in Russia.

Incidentally, you may be interested to know that although the Black Widow got her start as one of Iron Man's super-foes, one of her early appearances as a heroine was in the pages of none other than THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #86. So they aren't exactly complete strangers.

Nor, we're sure, are any of you strangers to our LETTER OF THE MONTH! As always, we've burrowed through our mountain of mail to pull out a letter that we think will be of particular interest to Marvelites far and wide. In fact, this time, our Letter of the Month concerns burrowing through a different kind of mountain — a mountain of comic books!

Dear **MARVEL AGE**rs,

I've read you have a warehouse where you keep copies of all the comics Marvel publishes. In the age of computers, there must be a way you

keep track of character appearances.

Yes, I do have a certain Marvel character in mind. It's Magik, otherwise known as Illyana Rasputin. Since she succumbed to the legacy virus in **UNCANNY X-MEN #303**, her fans have been very sad, and I thought a complete list of her appearances would help ease the pain. Please don't leave us out in the cold.

Chip Wentworth
19 Smith St.
Fryeburg, ME 04037

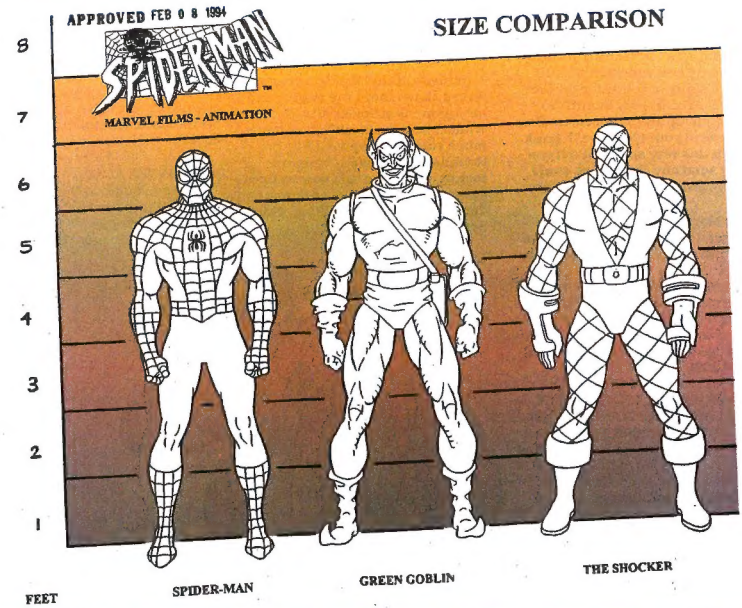
Actually, Chip, the collection is far from complete, but Marvel does indeed keep huge numbers of comic books in a warehouse. They're not generally there for sale or library use, though. They're used in publishing reprints or foreign editions of our comics. For example, if a foreign publisher wants to translate DARKHAWK into Swahili, the friendly folks in our Licensing Department make a deal and send them copies of the English-language comics, along with the photostats or films they need to print the artwork.

As for as computer records of character appearances go, sorry, but no such thing exists, unless you count the encyclopedic, computer-like brain of OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE scribe and Archivist/Continuity Coordinator Peter Sanderson. Truth to tell, even if we had it all computerized, it would be very difficult to print checklists of character appearances in MARVEL AGE, simply because they take up so much space, and we like to squeeze as many of your letters as we can into theses pages. (However, you can find checklists of various characters' most significant appearances in the MARVEL UNIVERSE MASTER EDITION.)

Still, we guess that Illyana's death does make this a special case. And, by coincidence, we recently received an Illyana checklist from another reader. His name is. . . let's see. . .Chip Wentworth of Fryeburg, ME. Say, you two guys aren't related, are you?

Anyway, as a rare exception, here's the list:

AVENGERS: 299
CLASSIC X-MEN: 21, 29
EXCALIBUR: 8, 23, 52, 68
FALLEN ANGELS: 1, 2, 7
FIRESTAR: 2
MAGIK: 1-4
MARVEL AGE: 6, 16, 37, 48, 54, ANNUAL #s 1-4
MARVEL FANFARE: 27, 38, 45, 55
MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL: 5
MARVEL SUPER HEROES (1990): 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP: 135, 149
NEW MUTANTS: 1, 3, 14-21, 24, 25, 29-40, 43-47, 50-77, 81, ANNUAL #s 1-7, SPECIAL EDITION #1
NIGHTCRAWLER: 1-4
OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE DELUXE EDITION: 7, 9
OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE MASTER EDITION: 30
POWER PACK: 40, 42
ROM ANNUAL: 3
SECRET WARS II: 1, 8, 9
SPELLBOUND: 4
UNCANNY X-MEN: 145, 146, 148, 153, 154, 158, 160, 164, 168,

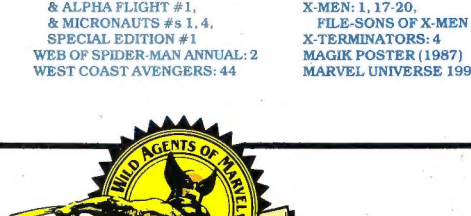


One of the many "Size Comparison Sheets" prepared by the Marvel Films staff for all of the artists working on the *Spider-Man* animated series. Since there will be many illustrators working on the series' animation, these guides will help them keep straight the visual relationship between the cartoon cast members. Size comparison sheets will be available for villains, supporting cast members, and even for characters such as "New York Police Officers," "Newsroom People," "Thugs," "Oscorp Technicians," and "New York People."

Jim Steranko, whose rendition of THE X-MEN *first* appeared in issues #50 and #51, has produced a *new* piece starring the modern-day lineup of the mutant team and their arch-foe, Mr. Sinister. A portion of the poster is shown here. Beginning in mid-April, through a promotion by Chef Boyardee® canned pasta and Marvel Comics, fans will be able to order the 22"x34" glow-in-the-dark full-color poster by sending five proof of purchase seals from any 15 oz. (or larger) Chef Boyardee pasta and $3.99 to the address noted in advertising and on specially-marked Chef Boyardee cans.

171, 179, 183, 188-192, 197, 200, 201, 210, 211, 213, 225, 230, 231, 299-303, ANNUAL #s 7-10, & ALPHA FLIGHT #1, & MICRONAUTS #s 1, 4, SPECIAL EDITION #1
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL: 2
WEST COAST AVENGERS: 44
WHAT IF. . .? (2nd ed.): 1, 6, 9, 12, 24, 33
WHAT THE — ?: 1-4
X-FORCE ANNUAL: 1
X-MEN: 1, 17-20, FILE-SONS OF X-MEN
X-TERMINATORS: 4
MAGIK POSTER (1987)
MARVEL UNIVERSE 1992
TRADING CARD: 199 (Inferno)
UNCANNY X-MEN TRADING CARD: 84: (Magik)

Like we said, printing checklists takes a lot of space. But before we have to run, let's pick up a little intelligence from one of our favorite Wild Agents of Marvel in our monthly. . .



Don't forget: To take part in the WAM Jam, all you have to do is write to us on official WAM stationery or include your WAM I.D. number in your letter. Hey, we can use all the intelligence we can get, so why not throw yours into the mix?

Dear WAM,

Just thought I'd drop a line and tell Marvel thanks for being around! You see I had gotten out of the hospital, a few months back, from being very seriously ill. You know what? One of the things that really helped to cheer me up was going to the local comics shop and catching up on the exploits of my favorite Marvel characters. It goes to prove that comics aren't bad for you. Again, thank you, Marvel, and all of the talented people who create the issues I like each and every month!

Tania Gray
2150 Abbott St.
Oxnard, CA 93033

And thank you for passing along the kind words, Tania! We're glad to hear that you're feeling better, and it's nice to know that we helped keep you going when times were tough.

Which reminds us: Comic books can make a great get-well gift for folks who need something to read. And remember, you can earn a nifty No-Prize for taking your extra comic books and donating them to a local hospital (or for any other service above and beyond the call of duty, for that matter).

checklist

MARVEL PRESS POSTERS

4.95 each

- **Spider-Man** by Glen Orbik
- **The Punisher** by Kent Williams
- **The X-Men** by Bob Larkin
- **Thing vs. Hulk** by Claudio Castillini

ANNUALS

64 pages—tales told from the villain's perspective

AVENGERS ANNUAL #23 Pluto attacks Hercules.	2.95
DARKHAWK ANNUAL #3 Darkhawk murderer!	2.95
IRON MAN ANNUAL #15 Iron Man battles the Controller.	2.95
NAMOR ANNUAL #4 HYDRA plots an aquatic apocalypse.	

MATCHES OF THE MONTH

2099 UNLIMITED #5 Hulk 2099 vs. Vulx	3.95
CABLE #13 Cable vs. D'Spayre	2.00
INCREDIBLE HULK #419 Hulk vs. Talos the Tamed	1.50
MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED #6 Dr. Strange vs. Varnae	3.95
PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #68 The Punisher vs. the Marvel Universe	1.95
RAVAGE 2099 #20 Ravage vs. The Hunter	1.50
SPIDER-MAN #47 Demogoblin *and* Hobgoblin	1.95
SPIDER-MAN/X-FACTOR #3 (of 3) Spidey & X-Factor vs. the Shadowforce	1.95
VENOM: THE MACE #3 (of 3) Venom & Mace vs. Sunrise Society	2.95
WOLVERINE #83 Logan vs. Silver Samurai & Sunfire	1.95
X-FACTOR #104 Polaris & Havok vs. Mr. Sinister	1.50

PREMIERES

BLACK CAT #1 (of 4) The cat confronts Cardiac.	1.50
BLADE: THE VAMPIRE HUNTER #1 Alone against the vampires armed with only a stake and a foil-stamped cover	2.95
FORCE WORKS #1 48 pages and pop-up cover	3.95
GALACTIC GUARDIANS #1 (of 4) Interplanetary war	1.50
THE LION KING #1 A 48-page adaptation of the new Disney animated feature	2.50

First Week

2099 UNLIMITED #5	3.95
THE ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX #3 (of 4) Is Nathan Christopher still alive?	2.95
BLADE VAMPIRE HUNTER #1	2.95
CABLE #13	2.00
CAPTAIN AMERICA #429 Cap investigates psycho-patriot Americop.	1.50
DAREDEVIL #330	1.50
DARKHAWK #41 "Amulet Quest" concludes.	1.50
DARKHAWK ANNUAL #3	2.95
FORCE WORKS #1	3.95
GROO THE WANDERER #114 Groo battles berserker buzzards.	2.25
MIDNIGHT SONS ASHCAN	.75
MOEBIUS: STEL	14.95
NAMOR #52 Is Namor a father?	1.50
PUNISHER SUMMER SPECIAL 1994	2.50
REN & STIMPY #20 The boys visit the Muddy Mudskipper Show.	1.95
SPIDER-MAN 2099 #21 At last! The lowdown on Lyla.	1.50
SPIDER-MAN CLASSIC #16 Kraven the Hunter lives again.	1.25
SPIDER-MAN MAGAZINE #3 Packed with pre-school Spidey sagas	1.95
UNCANNY X-MEN #314 The White Queen leads the team.	1.50
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #114	1.50

Second Week

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #391 Shriek & Carrion, they're back!	1.50
BARBIE #43 Ken becomes a seaman.	1.50
BLACKWULF #2 Blackwulf returns from the dead.	1.50
CONAN CLASSIC #2 A classic penciled by Barry Windsor Smith	1.50
CONAN SAGA #88 Bela battles for the throne of Shem.	2.25
GHOST RIDER #51 Dan Knoch returns as Ghost Rider.	1.95
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #50	2.00
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #51	2.95
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #150 Alan Davis's Clandestine	1.75
MARVEL PRESS POSTERS	4.95
NAMOR ANNUAL #4	2.95
NIGHT THRASHER #12	1.95
PRISON COLONY #2 (of 3) Continuing the movie adaptation	1.50
PUNISHER WAR ZONE #29 Frank escapes from prison.	1.95
QUASAR #60	1.25
RAVAGE 2099 #20	1.50
SACHS & VIOLENS #4 (of 4) Mayhem at Mardi Gras	2.25
SECRET DEFENDERS #17 The quest for the Moebius Stone	1.95
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Third Week

AVENGERS #376	1.50
AVENGERS ANNUAL #23	2.95
BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD #5 Tattoos are cool, heh, heh, heh...	1.95
BRATS BIZARRE #3 (of 4) The Brats bring down the hive.	2.50
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DOOM 2099 #19 Enter the Savage Land 2099	1.50
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GHOST RIDER 2099 #3 Ghostie hunts his killers.	1.50
G.I. JOE #150	2.00
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NOVA #7	1.95
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REN & STIMPY SUMMER JOBS SPECIAL #2	2.95
ROCKO'S MODERN LIFE #2 Spunky gets worms.	1.95
SABRETOOTH CLASSICS #3 Sabretooth teams with Constrictor.	1.50
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X-MEN 2099 #10 Lunatica reappears.	1.50
X-MEN ADVENTURES II TPB	4.95

UP CLOSE

HELLSTORM #16 2.00

"This is the big one. It explains everything that the fans have been asking since issue #1: what happened when Hellstorm faced off against his father in hell, the truth about who and what he is and—guess what—Patsy isn't dead! Writer Warren Ellis summed [it] up. . . 'We may not win any awards but if we give several thousand people the most inventive and interesting read of the month, I'll settle for that.' —*Editor Marie Javins*

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #158 1.75

"I got a call from Editor in Chief Tom DeFalco while he was visiting Marvel UK, saying he had a story by someone who was 'really big,' but [he] wouldn't give me any names. It didn't take me long to figure out that it was Alan Davis. This eight-pager by Davis and Mark Farmer is a prequel to his brand new super hero team book THE CLANDESTINE." —*Editor Richard Ashford*

MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED #6 3.95

"We're presenting three "flashback" stories that, on the surface, are Dr. Strange vs. Varnae. . .but underneath are also about Doc and Clea's relationship over the years. One is set in the 1960's, the other in the 1970's, and the last in the present day. The sixties story is being drawn by classic Marvel artist **Marie Severin**, the seventies tale by **Gene "the Dean" Colan**, and the contemporary one by newcomer **Robert Teasey**. All are by DR. STRANGE writer **David Quinn**, with . . . elements such as the present day Nightstalkers *before* they became the Nightstalkers." —*Editor Evans Skolnick*

WHAT IF? #63 1.75

"What if War Machine had not destroyed the Living Laser?"—the first ever Marvel "choose-your-own-ending" story. We picked this IRON MAN "short" story to add alternate endings. In the original, Rhodey (War Machine) was running Stark Enterprises while Tony Stark was "dead." When the Living Laser came looking for Stark, Rhodey tricked him into thinking he would get a job as a scientist at Stark Enterprises, then shot him into space. We're starting with the premise that the Living Laser *did* go to work for the company, then we offer three *different* endings. This is an experiment—if the fans like it, we'll do it again." —*Editor Rob Tokar*

CROSSOVERS

Time and Time Again 1.95

NIGHT THRASHER #12 1.95
Part 5 of 8: Thrash busts out of jail.

NOVA #7 1.50
Part 6 of 8: Firestar is tried as a witch.

NEW WARRIORS #49
Part 7 of 8: What's happened to Speedball?

Fourth Week

BLACK CAT #1 (of 4) 1.50

HELLSTORM #16 2.00
With a new writer and darker direction

IRON MAN ANNUAL #15 2.95

THE LION KING #1 2.50

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #159 1.75
Continuing tales of Vengeance, Hawkeye, New Warriors, and The Destroyer

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT
A free listing of Marvel's June titles

NEW WARRIORS #49 1.50

NORTHSTAR #4 (of 4) 1.75

PUNISHER 2099 #18 1.50
Jake gets a robotic new partner.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #223 2.25
An evil sorcerer wants Conan—for dinner!

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #214 1.50
"Hail Mary" concludes.

VENOM: THE MACE #3 (of 4) 2.95

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEK WORLD #23 1.75
Late-Night holovision wars

WOLVERINE/TYPHOID MARY: TYPHOID'S KISS 6.95

X-FORCE #36 1.50
The Externals return.

Fifth Week

BARBIE FASHION #43 1.25

DR. STRANGE #67 1.95
Salome attacks Clea.

FANTASTIC FOUR #390 1.50

GALACTIC GUARDIANS #1 (of 4) 1.50

IRON MAN #306 1.50

MARVEL MASTERPIECES II #1 (of 3) 2.95

NIGHTWATCH #4 1.50

OFFICIAL INDEX TO THE X-MEN #4 (of 5) 1.95
Indexing UNCANNY X-MEN #178-234

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #68 1.95
"Pariah" part 3

SILVER SURFER #94 1.50

SPIDER-MAN/ X-FACTOR #3 (of 3) 1.95

THOR #476 1.50
Dr. Donald Blake alive?

THUNDERSTRIKE #10 1.25

X-MEN CLASSIC #97
Introducing Warpath

MAY SPOTLIGHT

G.I. JOE #150 2.00
Snake-Eyes vs. Cobra Commander; 48-page special

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #50 2.95
A foil-embossed, 48-page special

MOEBIUS: STEL 14.95
An 80-page graphic novel by the master

MARVEL MASTERPIECES II #1 (of 3) 2.95
A comic-sized collection of the trading card artwork

MIDNIGHT SONS ASHCAN .75
Glimpse the dark side

PUNISHER SUMMER SPECIAL 1994 2.50
Frank punishes poachers in this 48-pager.

REN & STIMPY 2.95

SUMMER JOBS SPECIAL #2
A 48-page primer on how *not* to get work.

SPIDER-MAN TPB: ROUND ROBIN 15.95
This 144-page edition teams Punisher, Nova, Night Thrasher and Darkhawk.

WOLVERINE/TYPHOID MARY: TYPHOID'S KISS 6.95
A 64-page tale of love and death

X-MEN ADVENTURES II TPB 4.95
Collecting issues #5-8